

THURSDAY JANUARY 25 1990

LAST MONTH'S
AVERAGE DAILY SALE
424,000
No 63,612

Ford unions snubbed in 10.2% deal

'Benchmark' pay rise fuels inflation fears

By Kevin Eason and Nicholas Wood

Nearly 32,000 Ford workers have snubbed union demands for a national strike and accepted a two-year deal worth 10.2 per cent this year.

Union leaders immediately seized on the settlement as a benchmark for millions of people in the coming pay round; but MPs and industrialists were quick to insist that such rises had to be earned.

If double-figure rises became the norm, they would only fuel the inflationary spiral.

Union negotiators had rejected Ford's final offer — which is worth 8 per cent or the inflation rate plus 2.5 per cent next year — confident that workers would back a crippling all-out strike.

But the secret ballot proved a reversal of last month's vote when the hourly-paid workforce voted four-to-one for walkouts that would have cost

Ford £30 million a day. Ford last week added only 0.5 per cent to the second stage of the offer and an extra day's holiday for some experienced workers. But the workforce at 21 plants rejected union recommendations that they fight for more and 59 per cent voted for acceptance.

Ford executives emphasized last night that the offer could be financed by its own profitability and a series of

The Confederation of British Industry welcomed the Ford workers' vote yesterday but said it was no benchmark. Pay deals not earned by better performance would mean job losses and higher inflation. Sir Trevor Holdsworth, the CBI president, said settlements had reached a critical point.

£700 million for last year, making Ford of Britain the most successful arm of the company's international empire.

Apart from the straight cash offer, worth between £40 and £50 a week on average, Ford has included measures which should result in greater efficiency on production lines.

Assembly workers, who account for a third of the workforce, will receive 13 per cent in the first year as a reward for improving production line speeds.

Other productivity measures include selecting key teams of workers to maintain high-technology equipment and act as assembly line troubleshooters.

Voting for the deal was close, with the majority reduced to just 50 at the 4,000-strong Dagenham assembly plant; and at the neighbouring body plant, the votes were 1,800 for and 1,600 against.

Halewood, which has been closed for two weeks in wildcat action by 550 skilled craftsmen, also voted to accept the deal. Only the Bridgend engine plant, which employs about 1,500, and Swansea voted to strike.

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proposals to improve productivity over the next two years.

There seems little prospect that the 50 union negotiators, who meet on Friday, will stand in the way of the settlement, which they said would set a "going rate" for workers entering negotiations.

Mr Gavin Laird, general secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, said: "Double figures were always our target. This now sets the benchmark for all workers"; and Mr Jimmy Airlie, secretary of the joint negotiating committee said: "Inflation and the threat of increased mortgage rates are the trigger for high pay demands. There is no question of greed."

That leaves Mr John Major, the Chancellor, with the problem of how to contain wage rises which threaten to push inflation even higher, damaging City confidence and risking interest rate rises.

Pay demands for 1.5 million workers will be tabled soon, with the highest probably coming from 750,000 town hall workers, who want between 7 and 15 per cent; and British Rail's 100,000 staff who are likely to seek rises to better last year's 8.8 per cent.

Ford had been chastised by the Government for putting a deal on the table which could prove counter to the battle against inflation, but union leaders claimed that the rises were deserved because of the company's record £673 million profits achieved in 1988 and the projected surplus of

Maori 'hello' for Prince at Games



Prince Edward at the opening of the Commonwealth Games in Auckland yesterday (above) and exchanging ritual greetings with Sir Hugh Kawharu (inset), a Maori elder. Fatima Whitbread, the world and European women's javelin champion, has pulled out with fitness problems. Reports, pages 42, 44

Azerbaijan crisis

Fresh fighting in Baku

From Mary Dejevsky, Moscow, and Hazhiz Teimourian, London

Soviet troops cracked down on the last visible signs of nationalist dissent in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, yesterday amid reports of fresh fighting, this time in the port.

According to one witness, Soviet tanks, artillery and warships opened fire on merchant vessels blockading the city's port after troops arrested 43 Azerbaijani nationalist leaders and ransacked the headquarters of the Popular Front, confiscating files and photocopies and cutting telephone lines.

"They started firing from artillery guns, grenade-launchers and heavy machine-guns from the embankment and also from naval ships sealed in

the harbour," Mr Yusuf Samad-Ogly, a poet and member of the Front, said.

"The fire lasted about 40 minutes. I saw that some of the civilian ships were hit because there were flashes

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from them. I think some were sunk and others retreated into the open sea," he said.

Tass later confirmed that the blockade had been lifted.

A Baku resident confirmed in an interview with *The Times* that fierce fighting had erupted in the city and that as many as 355 people had so far been killed. That compares

with an official death toll of 99.

Iran yesterday said hundreds of Soviet Azerbaijanis had converged on their common border and some had begun building a bridge over the Araks River which forms part of it.

Despite earlier reports that Soviet troops had recovered full control of the frontier regions, Iran's official news agency said that at one point, some 12 miles west of the frontier town of Poldasht, about 300 Soviet Azerbaijanis reached border installations.

It was about six miles further west of here that a group began building a bridge across the Araks.

Football ID card scheme shelved

By Robin Oakley, Political Editor

The Government is preparing to climb down on its controversial plan to introduce a compulsory identity cards for football supporters.

After detailed criticisms of the plan by the yet-to-be-published inquiry into the Sheffield Hillsborough tragedy by Lord Justice Taylor, first disclosed in yesterday's *Times*, ministers have conceded that the Government would face the utmost difficulty in getting any identity cards scheme through Parliament.

On Monday Mr David Waddington, the Home Secretary, is expected to spell out to MPs that although the Government has not aban-

doned interest in such a scheme, it will be put on ice for a few years, with the powers to set up a Football Membership Authority kept in reserve.

Opponents of identity cards were jubilant yesterday and the Labour Party called for its

Scheme sidelined 44

complete scapping. Mr Denis Howell, Labour's spokesman, said the Government had shown the first bit of commonsense in the three years its "ludicrous" proposals had been considered. "This is a humiliating climbdown for the Government and for Mrs Thatcher."

NEXT WEEK



● The Times Crossword — the world's most famous puzzle — is 60 years old next week. To mark the event, we shall be publishing *The Times* Diamond Jubilee Crossword, the biggest we have ever compiled, and as challenging as any that have appeared over the past six decades. The first clues to this prize crossword will appear on Monday. For more details, see page 3

INSIDE

Portfolio PLATINUM

● Four readers shared yesterday's £2,000 daily prize (see page 3). Today's chance to win £2,000: page 27

● Our five-page report on the latest advances in science and technology begins on page 31

Market squall

London's equity market weathered a global storm, yesterday despite another computer failure. After falling by more than 40 points the FT-SE 100 closed 12.5 lower at 2,278.6. Page 23

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MEPs promised more contact with ministers

By Robin Oakley and Richard Ford

Conservative members of the European Parliament have been promised more access to British Government ministers as part of efforts to improve relations between the Euro MPs and the Government.

Mr Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, last night called stories of rifts between the Government and the Tory MEPs "myths and mists" and promised that they would be given the chance of greater input into government attitudes. The MEPs met Mrs

Thatcher in Downing Street yesterday and found her receptive.

After the meeting Mr Hurd said: "They are a crucial and inherent part of the Conservative Party. Our efforts in the constituencies have to be absolutely united."

However Sir Christopher Prout, the leader of the 32 Conservative MEPs, acknowledged afterwards that there were a number of issues on which they took a different view to the Government.

Policeman killed in snowstorm helicopter crash

By Michael Horsnell and William Peakin

An officer was killed when a police helicopter, which had been tracking a car believed to have been used in a robbery, crashed into a block of retirement flats in Glasgow yesterday.

The crash came as Britain suffered the heaviest snowfalls so far this winter.

Two other officers and the pilot escaped, though one is seriously ill after being cut from the wreckage.

The general purpose single-engine helicopter, a Bell 206B JetRanger, clipped a penthouse flat at the top of the five-storey building on the outskirts of the city before plunging to the ground.

No one in the flats, at Eastwood

Toll in the city's southern suburbs, was hurt. The dead man was last night named as Sergeant Malcolm Herd, aged 32, of East Kilbride, a father of four with 12 years service in the police. The policemen injured in the accident were Sgt William Shields and Inspector John Muir, aged 44, of East

Photograph 2

Kilbride. The pilot, Mr Graham Pryke, was last night in a serious condition in Glasgow Victoria Infirmary.

Assistant Chief Constable John Dickson, of Strathclyde Police, said the helicopter had been diverted from traffic duties to a robbery and was returning to its normal duties when

the accident happened. "There is no question it was chasing a car — that is not the case."

It was on hire to Strathclyde Police from Clyde Helicopters, a private company providing traffic reports for a commercial radio station in the city.

Two inspectors from the Department of Transport's air accident investigation branch were called in shortly after the accident at 2.20pm and a full police investigation was launched.

Firemen sprayed foam on the helicopter to prevent fire breaking out. Twelve residents of the building were evacuated but none needed hospital treatment.

A resident, Mrs Rita Hollingwood, aged 64, said: "I was on the phone at

the time to my sister. I thought the thing was coming straight through my front window. It was terrifying — it's a noise I'll never forget. It's a miracle I'm still here."

Continued on page 22, col 1

Whitbread book prize for Holmes

By Philip Howard

The winner of the 1989 Whitbread Book of the Year is *Coleridge, Early Visions*, by Richard Holmes (Hodder & Stoughton, £16.95).

The book is the first of a vivid two-volume critical and personal biography of Coleridge, which takes the poet down to the age of 30.

Mr Holmes receives £20,250 in addition to the £1,750 that goes to each of the five category winners on the shortlist.

Gerontius, by James Hamilton-Paterson (Macmillan, £12.95), was winner of the first novel category and "runner-up".

The Chymical Wedding, by Lindsay Clarke (Cape, £12.95), won the novel category while the children's novel section was won by *Why Weeps the Broom?*, by Hugh Scott (Walker Books, £7.95).

Airline fee rise could hit fares

By Harvey Elliott, Air Correspondent

Charges levied on airlines for flying through British airspace are to rise by more than 40 per cent from April 1, adding still further to spiralling operating costs which some airlines

calculate could add up to 15 per cent to the price of an air ticket.

The Civil Aviation Authority said last night that it made "no apology" for the increases, which were necessary to pay for the £600 million being invested in new air traffic control equipment.

The charges are based on a complicated formula involving aircraft weight and the length of time spent in British airspace.

They are levied on aircraft which fly into or over Britain and last year raised £146 million for the authority. This year that will rise to more than £200 million to be shared among the two million flights which the authority handles each year. The increase will cost British Airways alone a further £13 million next year.

The new charge is one of

Continued on page 22, col 7

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Times crossword celebrates 60th birthday with feast of a puzzle

By Mark Souster

Next Thursday marks the 60th birthday of *The Times* crossword puzzle, widely acknowledged to be the most famous, or perhaps infamous, in the world.

Since 1930, the puzzle has become an indispensable, if frustrating, start to the day for many thousands of enthusiasts. The term "addict" is frowned upon, although as Mr John Grant, the crossword editor, said: "Addiction is not essential, but it helps."

To mark the anniversary, *The Times* is producing the Diamond Jubilee Puzzle, a feast of clues to test even the most astute intellect. It will be in five

sections and published on consecutive days beginning on Monday. First prize is £1,000 and a holiday to India.

The scale of the puzzle is mind-boggling. It is the size of nine ordinary crosswords, which themselves take many hours to compile. It has 208 clues and two 45-letter phrases as answers to clues which interlock the individual grids.

Mr Grant said: "For a *Times* puzzle, it is hard. It will not unlock its secrets easily."

The compiler, a university teacher in a department of psychology, whose identity must remain a secret, spent much of

Christmas producing his masterpiece. His wife, who, he confesses, is a "crossword widow", said: "I must be the only wife who is woken in the middle of the night by a husband saying 'Can I try a clue on you?'"

Where does one begin to produce the ultimate crossword? Our compiler, who occasionally uses the pseudonym Virgilus, after an ancient Irish monk who, to waste away the time made up acrostics, the forerunner to the crossword, started by blanking in a regular pattern of squares, adding in as necessary. There was no grid.

It was a case of making it up as he went

along, being careful to maintain symmetry and avoid getting bogged down in a corner.

He is particularly pleased with the two 45-letter phrases which interlock the nine grids. One of them, about Winnie the Pooh, he found "pure serendipity". Otherwise it was a case of head down and work as fast as possible.

He produces one ordinary puzzle for *The Times* each week and has done for the past 15 years.

"*The Times* is the best crossword," he said. "It is the one I would do myself through choice. It is considerably more interesting than the others among daily

newspapers." One of the most famous solvers of *The Times* crossword is Sir John Gielgud, still an enthusiast at the age of 85. He started in 1944 when a stage hand at the Haymarket Theatre staggered him by his crossword expertise.

Sir John said: "Since that time I have found the crosswords a sovereign therapy during endless hours of waiting about while filming and during television."

The first crossword appeared on February 1, 1930. In 1933, there was much correspondence in *The Times* about how quickly the puzzle could be

completed. Sir Austen Chamberlain, the conservative statesman, wrote that the then Provost of Eton boiled his egg at breakfast during the time it took him to complete the puzzle. And he did not like hard-boiled eggs.

That elicited the following response from a Yorkshireman: "I had hoped... that boiling an egg might help. I started at 8am and it is now 15.05 and the egg has burst."

According to the *Guinness Book of Records*, Mr Roy Dean, of Bromley, Kent, holds the record for the fastest completed *Times* crossword: three minutes 45 seconds, a feat achieved in 1970.

Editor blames rival who said too much for Bordes scandal

Mr Andrew Neil, the editor of *The Sunday Times* told a libel jury yesterday that the editor of the *Observer* had tried to woo Miss Pamela Bordes away from him.

Mr Neil said the rival editor, Mr Donald Treford, "could not keep his mouth shut", sealing Mr Neil's fate as a "victim of circumstance" once Miss Bordes was exposed as a prostitute. The fact that two editors had been chasing the former Commons researcher was "too good a story to miss".

Mr Neil is suing *The Sunday Telegraph* and its former editor, Mr Peregrine Worsthorne, over two articles and a cartoon which he claims implied he knew Miss Bordes was a prostitute at the time of their four-month relationship.

The court was told yesterday that Mr Neil had discussed inviting Mr Worsthorne to join *The Sunday Times* after he was removed as editor of *The Sunday Telegraph* last year, but the talks came to nothing.

Earlier, Mr Patrick Milmo, QC, for *The Sunday Telegraph*, referred to Mr Worsthorne's article which said Mr Neil and Mr Treford were known as "Randy Andy" and "Dirty Don".

Mr Neil said the nicknames were "neither accurate nor dignified", but such coverage was inevitable, given Mr Treford's public comments about the Bordes affair. "Mr Treford, unlike myself, can't keep his mouth shut."

Mr Milmo asked: "So this was all Donald Treford's fault?"

Mr Neil: "Obviously."

Mr Milmo went on to refer to a diary item in the *London Evening Standard* which said Miss Bordes liked Mr Neil to jump around doing gorilla impersonations.

Mr Neil said it was not unknown for newspaper editors to attempt to make fun of him. "That is the price you pay for being editor of a well-known newspaper. Mr Worsthorne has suffered from that sort of coverage, too. Fleet Street is often a dog-eat-dog world."

Mr Neil agreed that, with hindsight, it was unfortunate he had gone out with Miss

Bordes, but the coverage would have been less had the press not discovered that Mr Treford also had an "association" with her.

"During the four months I had been going out with Pamela, Donald Treford had made several advances and been rebuffed."

"When I stopped going out with her, I warned him that it would be a mistake to go out with her because no newspaper could resist a story of two editors and the same woman."

"Donald agreed, but afterwards went back on it and formed some sort of association with her — I put it no higher than that," he said.

Asked whether Mr Treford had competed with him for Miss Bordes's attentions, Mr Neil replied: "There were certain events that suggested that he was."

Mr Milmo asked Mr Neil if he agreed there was no such thing in life as a free crumb. Was there a price to pay if a man appeared with a pretty girl in public?

Mr Neil replied: "If there is, it's surprising I've only had to pay once."

Mr Neil said he spent a "pretty miserable week" after the *News of the World* broke the story that Miss Bordes was a prostitute.

Asked whether the substantial coverage demeaned his status as editor of *The Sunday Times*, Mr Neil replied: "Only if I had consciously brought the events upon me. I did not. I felt unfortunate and unlucky at the publicity." He had not played a central role in the scandal, although he had "a substantial walk-on part".

Mr Neil agreed that had he known Miss Bordes was a prostitute he would not have associated with her, "but it was not incumbent on me to set *The Sunday Times* insight team on every girl I intended to take out."

He had not acted irresponsibly and self-indulgently in having an affair with Miss Bordes. "The logic of that view is that I should not go out with anyone in case their past comes back to haunt me. I should stay at home every night and do my knitting."

But he said he thought it

would be wrong knowingly to go out with a prostitute.

Mr Milmo pointed to a reference in Mr Worsthorne's article to the 1963 leader by Sir William Haley, editor of *The Times*, saying the Profumo scandal could not be shrugged off as a question of security but affected the moral status of the nation.

Was it not a point of view that Mr Neil was not in a position to write an objective leader on any aspect of the Bordes affair?

Mr Neil replied that there was no parallel between his behaviour and that of Profumo: "That was a moral issue — in his adultery and lying."

Mr Neil said that a few days after the article, Mr Worsthorne was removed as editor of *The Sunday Telegraph*, where he remains editor of the opinion section.

Mr Neil said there were discussions about whether Mr Worsthorne should join *The Sunday Times* staff, and Mr Worsthorne had said he would consider joining the paper, but they came to nothing. "I had a terrible foreboding about having him after this article, but I felt the competitive position of *The Sunday Times* was more important than what he had done, so there were discussions but they never reached fruition," Mr Neil said, adding that he was "rather relieved".

Opening the defence case, Mr Milmo said it was unusual to find two newspaper editors locked in legal combat.

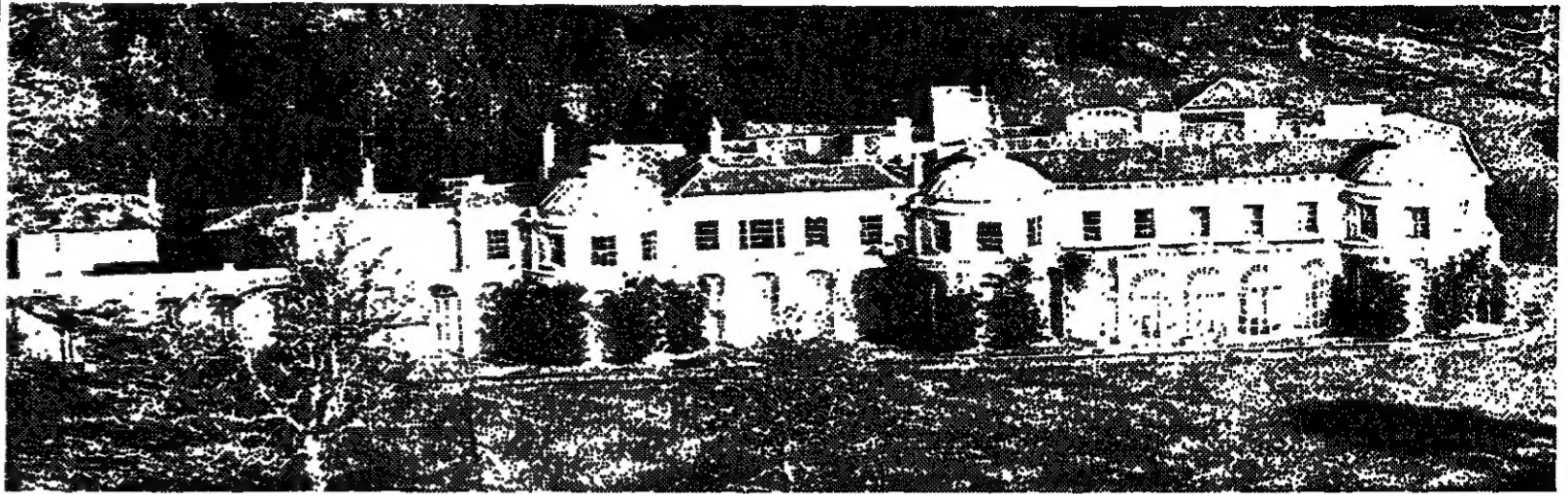
The ironic feature was that *Times* Newspapers, which was bringing the action with Mr Neil, was in the European Court claiming that the libel laws on which they were relying were a restriction upon freedom of expression.

The strangest thing of all was that Mr Neil was attacking another editor for exercising the right to comment and criticize on matters of public interest and on the conduct of persons who occupy positions of importance and prominence in public life.

Mr Milmo said: "Firing the gun is a great deal more fun than being the target. But editors are a legitimate target."

The case continues today.

Armed raiders loot country mansion



Dropmore House, in Buckinghamshire, the English mansion owned by Mr Muhammad Mahdi al-Tajir, which was burgled by armed robbers on Tuesday. Mr Muhammad Mahdi al-Tajir, a former United Arab Emirates ambassador (left), and Mr Khalid al-Tajir, his son, with their collection of gold and silver.

By Ruth Gledhill and Stewart Tendler

A gang of armed robbers has stolen more than £1 million in gold, art treasures, and other valuables after taking over the house to discover what had been taken. Mr al-Tajir has requested no publicity on the value of the haul.

Police said last night that the robbers seemed to have ignored valuables such as paintings and a jade collection and concentrated on the strong-room and its safe. They think the gang may have been hoping to steal Mr al-Tajir's silver collection which is at Christie's in London.

Mr al-Tajir has not visited the house for many months. Often a controversial figure in diplomatic circles, he came to public attention in 1986 when his brother was kidnapped and he paid a \$3 million ransom for his recovery.

The robbery began when the gang, wearing green wellington boots, green anoraks, and Balacavas, stopped Mr William Woolworth, the caretaker, at the

shuttered and guarded by police while explosives experts sifted the remains of what had been a strong-room and agents for the owner began an inventory of the house to discover what had been taken. Mr al-Tajir has requested no publicity on the value of the haul.

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main entrance to the house as he returned from the nearby public house.

Mr Muhammad Mahdi al-Tajir was a source of public fascination in the 1970s as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary for the United Arab Emirates in London (Sarah Jane Checkland writes). Public imagination was focused less on his official duties than on his wealth. "One billion, two billion, I am worth much more than that. On this telephone, I can get any amount of money I want," he was quoted as saying in 1975.

People marvelled at his five British homes, including a house in London, another in Mereworth, Kent, and a further mansion in Perthshire. Acquired as ruins, each was lovingly restored at great cost.

Dropmore was built for Lord Grenville, prime minister to King George II. For more than 40 years it was the home of Viscount Kemsley of Dropmore, the newspaper magnate who died in 1968.

PORTFOLIO

Four readers shared yesterday's £2,000 Portfolio Platinum prize.

Mr Raymond Briscoe of St Andrews, Fife, said: "The only other things I've ever won were a bottle of whisky and a half share in a coconut." An engineering contractor, he will spend his £500 on the firm he set up seven years ago.

Mrs Emily Johnson of Harrow, north-west London, and Mrs Joan Howard-Drake of Shipston-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire, said they would spoil children and grandchildren a little more on their birthdays. The fourth winner was Mrs Janet Chaloner, of Cheltenham.

Witness in donor case attacked

By David Sapped

One of the key witnesses in the General Medical Council inquiry into allegations of a trade in London in paid-for kidneys has been injured in an attack which is being linked to the illegal, organ brokerage business in Turkey.

It was a complaint from the victim of the attack, Mr Ahmed Koc, a peasant farmer from eastern Turkey, that initially led to the kidney trade being exposed and, eventually, to the appearance before a GMC hearing of three British doctors — Dr Raymond Crockett, a nephrologist, and Mr Michael Bewick and Mr Michael Joyce, both surgeons — charged with serious professional misconduct.

That hearing was adjourned last week and sources close to the GMC emphasized yesterday that the attack on Mr Koc in Turkey was not connected with the British doctors in any way. "A man has been arrested, however, and it does appear that the stabbing is linked with the kidney trade in Turkey," said one source.

Mr Koc, aged 34 and the father of four, was assaulted and stabbed when he returned from London to his home village of Gulluce earlier this month. His injuries were not extensive and, after hospital treatment, he is now reported to be on the way to making a full recovery.

The Turk said during his evidence to the GMC in December that he had been frightened that the organizers of the kidney trade in Turkey would want to kill him and early last year had sought protection from the local state prosecutor.

Retrospective for the master

By Liz Smith
Fashion Editor

Yves Saint Laurent, the man, and his legendary couture house, are in good shape. As he took the only standing ovation in the week of Paris fashion shows, Saint Laurent posed happily for photographers, looking trimmer by several pounds, which he shed when he was in recently with a broken arm.

He smiled to friends and clients in the front rows, and picked up the train of the traditional finale dress of palest pink, worn on this occasion by 18-year-old Lucie de la Falaise, the beautiful niece of his assistant, London de la Falaise.

Saint Laurent's first couture collection of the decade began with a light hearted run-through of many of his best loved classics, all in white. A fine wool blazer with trousers, a summery duffel coat in cotton, and a short boxy jacket in ribbed ottoman with side-wrapped skirt, worn with a white piqué or satin T-shirt, are classics that will continue to make a woman feel upbeat, contemporary and chic. A spidery panther pattern and a smudgy basketweave check are the new graphic prints for the summer, used in a series of dressier wrapover silk dresses.

Saint Laurent had fun paying tribute to many of the artists and personalities who have inspired his work, including Picasso, Cocteau, and Christian Bernard, as well as celebrated clients in the front row. Numbers were dedicated to Catherine Deneuve and Zizi Jeanmaire. For Deneuve it was a bright yellow silk dress with a puffed sleeve and low neck-line, and for Jeanmaire, a suitably leggy black sequinned T-shirt worn with sheer black tights.

Christian Dior, who groomed Saint Laurent as his successor before his death in 1957, inspired a colourful damask suit with balloon skirt, the original puffball skirt created by Saint Laurent while he was Dior's assistant. Even if Saint Laurent



Classic trouser suit in fine Prince of Wales checked fine wool, Yves Saint Laurent Couture.

spends less and less time in his studio, as has been rumoured, he is still capable of sensing what women want to wear. The one dazzling jewel-encrusted jacket shown over a simple white satin column of a dress was dedicated to his own couture house.

Jockey 'a leader of drug gang'

By Mark Souster

The flat race jockey Allan Mackay was one of the ring-leaders of an international plot to smuggle cocaine worth £7 million into Britain, a south London court was told yesterday.

Mr Mackay, aged 30, had a "managerial" role in the gang, as he travelled to international race meetings, it was alleged at Croydon Crown Court. The gang involved 28 people worldwide.

Mr Mackay was said to have been trapped by telephone monitoring as he arranged up to nine shipments of the drug, and was arrested after customs officers tracked the calls.

Mr Mackay and six defendants deny conspiracy to smuggle cocaine. The trial is expected to last five months. Four men had pleaded guilty to being couriers, the jury was told.

Mr Laurence Alt, for the prosecution, said the shipments were flown to Heathrow and Gatwick, in 1988. Customs officers seized 17 kilos of the cocaine, worth £3 million, during four attempted smuggling runs.

Besides Mr Mackay, of Moulton Road, Newmarket, the defendants are: James Lambie, of Falkirk; Theophanis Magerou, of Enfield, north London; Tony Koureas, and Costas Apostolou, both of Belsize Park, north-west London; Frank Joseph, of Camden; and Gerald Copeman, of North Finchley, both north London. Mr Magerou, Mr Koureas, Mr Apostolou, Mr Joseph and Mr Copeman also deny importing 4kg of cocaine on November 24, 1988.



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Millions of drivers willing to break the law, survey says

By Kevin Eason, Motoring Correspondent

More than eight out of 10 drivers want police to be given the power to carry out random breath tests, though as many as 1.7 million admit drinking and driving, according to a survey published yesterday.

The vote in favour of giving the police increased powers to stop and test motorists comes a week after the Government refused to toughen its stance against drink-drivers.

The survey discloses harder attitudes to motoring offences among drivers themselves even though they are prepared to admit to committing a series of offences which could result in injury or even death.

The statistics, compiled by MORI for Lex Service, depict a nation of motoring law breakers with 46 per cent of drivers admitting that they had committed at least one misdemeanour over the past six months.

Eight per cent of drivers said they had driven after having a drink which, extrapolated to the entire driving population of 21 million, is about 1.7 million motorists.

Men are the worst offenders, with 11 per cent of men confessing to MORI against just 4 per cent of women. A surprising 14 per cent of company car drivers - motorists who need their cars for their livelihoods - also say they drink and drive.

Another 23 per cent of motorists, about 5.2 million, overtake on the inside while 17 per cent, 3.9 million,

regularly jump traffic lights. A further 6 per cent said that they had raced with another driver on a public road.

Mr Bob Worcester, chairman of MORI, said the survey painted a picture of millions of drivers willing to break the law. "We suspect these figures are a minimum estimate and by no means a maximum."

Yet motorists told MORI they wanted a crackdown on law breakers with tough action against drink-drivers, motorists jumping lights and those driving too fast.

MORI found 83 per cent in favour of random breath tests. Another 64 per cent want the drink-drive limit reduced to no alcohol in the blood.

Motorists also wanted cameras placed at traffic light junctions to catch almost four million drivers who say they jump the lights.

Sir Trevor Chinn, Lex's chairman and chief executive, said: "Overall, the research shows that motorists want stronger police and government action against law breakers and also have increasing concern for a safer environment."

Although the majority of car owners showed they would responsibly to heed new legislation relating to the restraint of children under the age of 14 in the back seat, a stubborn 3 per cent refuse to strap their children into either adult seat belts or special child seats.

That means as many as

600,000 children travel unrestrained.

According to the survey, Britain's motorists waste 25 million hours a week sitting in traffic jams.

In a clear message to the Government that it must act to clear the nation's main roads of jams costing both private car owners and industry millions of pounds, almost half of motorists claim they now avoid motorways simply because of congestion.

The survey found that nine out of 10 drivers believe that congestion has worsened in the past two years, with 95 per cent in the South-east growing unhappier since last year over the time they waste in traffic jams.

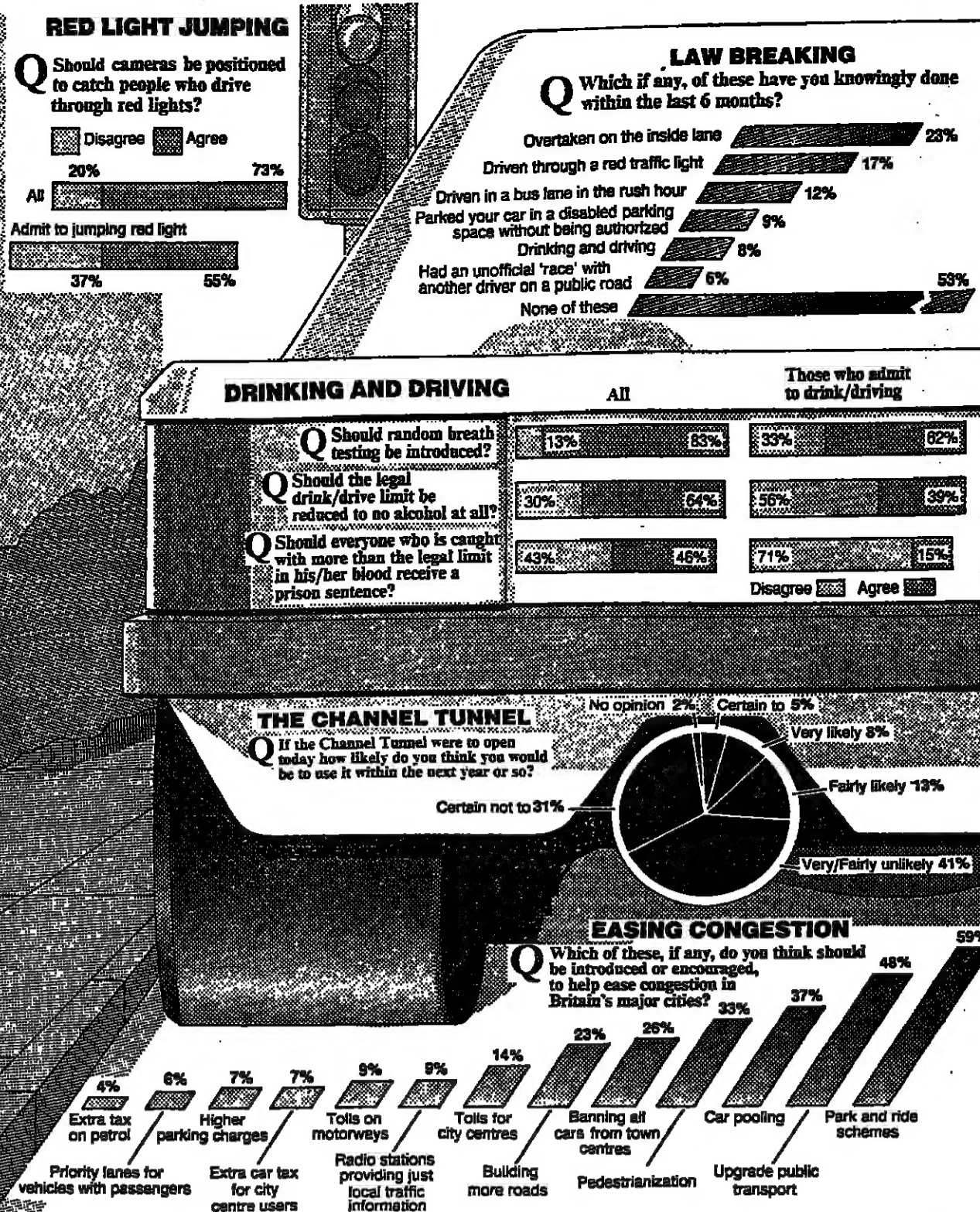
Public transport should be improved, according to 48 per cent, while 37 per cent want to see car pooling schemes.

The Channel tunnel has failed to inspire much confidence, according to the survey, for 18 per cent of the survey sample do not think the tunnel will be completed by 2001.

A further 72 per cent say that if the tunnel was opened today, they would be either unlikely or certain not to use it.

The statistics were compiled by MORI after interviewing 1,536 drivers in more than 170 locations.

Lex Report on Motoring 1990 (Lex Service, Lex House, 17, Connaught Place, London W2 2EL; £150).



Victims of yoghurt botulism to sue

Twenty-seven people who contracted botulism from contaminated hazelnut yoghurt last year are to sue for compensation.

PC Michael Taylor, aged 29, from Layton, Lancashire, was the first to issue a High Court writ for damages. Lawyers are to issue writs on behalf of 26 others, mostly from Blackpool and Manchester, after an inquest on Mrs Annie Newton, aged 74, of Blackpool, linked her death to hazelnut purée.

The defendants will be Healds, of Fleetwood, Lancashire, which is alleged to have sold the yoghurt, Acorn Foods, of Bilsborrow, Lancashire, where the yoghurt was made, and Young's Fruits, of Folkestone, Kent, which produced the hazelnut purée.

Shells found

Army bomb disposal experts blew up a mortar bomb in the centre of Oldbury, West Midlands, yesterday - one of more than 100 mortar bombs, grenades and anti-tank shells unearthed by workmen.

Smoke patrols

A team of travelling inspectors will seek out and prosecute smokers who break a smoking ban on South Yorkshire Transport buses.

Concert on

The Monsters of Rock music concert at Donington Park, Leicestershire, at which two fans died in 1988, has been given the go-ahead on condition that more stringent safety precautions be met.

Picture post

The thief who last summer stole from an exhibition a £225 painting by Mr Alan Emberley, an artist, of Dorchester, Dorset, returned it to him in the post yesterday.

Inquiry into conduct of murder case

By Peter Davenport

A senior detective leading the hunt for the killer of a 10-year-old schoolgirl is among nine police officers subject to an inquiry over the conduct of another murder case, it was disclosed yesterday.

Det Supt John Stainthorpe of West Yorkshire police, and eight other officers involved in investigating the murder of Mr Kenneth Wray, are the subject of an inquiry by South Yorkshire Police under the supervision of the Police Complaints Authority. Mr Wray, aged 39 and disabled, was stabbed to death in his home at Bramley, Leeds in 1987.

After his death, Steven Backhouse, aged 42, of Wyther Park Road, Leeds was found guilty at the city's Crown

Court and sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder. At the trial, his counsel maintained that the victim's brother was the killer. Backhouse and the victim's brother, Stephen Wray, had both been jailed for 12 years before the murder trial, when they admitted charges of rape.

Mr Keith Lomax, Backhouse's solicitor, said his client had always denied killing Mr Wray. He had lodged an appeal against the conviction, but it would not be heard until after the present investigation by South Yorkshire police.

He said that notices had been served on nine officers under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

It is understood that the investigation, headed by Chief Supt Brian Mole of

South Yorkshire, concerns alleged discrepancies in the original murder inquiry.

A spokesman for West Yorkshire Police confirmed that the inquiry was taking place and said: "No officer has been suspended, nor has the murder investigation been reopened. The man convicted of the murder of Mr Wray is presently serving a life sentence, and there is an appeal outstanding, therefore there is nothing else which can be said."

Yesterday Mr Stainthorpe confirmed that a complaint had been made. He is leading inquiries into the murder of Sarah Harper, who was abducted near her home at Morley, near Leeds, four years ago, and whose body was later found in the Trent.

Charges for sport may rise

By David Walker
Public Administration Correspondent

Charges for the use of local authority swimming pools and tennis courts may have to rise sharply if councils follow the advice of a report today from the Audit Commission.

The commission says that instead of blanket subsidies to keep down the cost of sports facilities, councils should charge full costs then subsidize only the poorer people who cannot afford them.

Significant savings on the estimated £50 million annual cost of the subsidies could be made. Councils will have to think much more clearly about what sports they cater for, the commission predicts, as they move towards the 1992 deadline set by the Government for putting pools and sports halls out to private tender.

Councils manage 1,700 indoor sports centres and pools together with tennis courts, football pitches and golf courses, although they are not obliged by law to support sport. The commission says they should have clear ideas of their aims.

Local Authority Support for Sports - a management handbook (Stationery Office; £8.50).

Van Gogh portrait of his doctor could fetch £22m

Christie's New York is to test the market with a major portrait by Van Gogh estimated at up to £22 million.

The portrait, which was painted six weeks before Van Gogh's suicide in July 1890, shows the artist's homeopathic doctor and friend Paul-Ferdinand Gachet posing gloomily beside the foxglove and digitalis with which he treated the artist.

Van Gogh, in a letter to his sister, Wilhelmina, said of the

SALE ROOM
by Sarah Jane Checkland
Art Market Correspondent

portrait: "I should like to paint portraits which would appear after a century to the people living then as apparitions... I do not endeavour to achieve this by a photographic resemblance, but by means of our impassioned

expressions." Paradoxically, perhaps, considering his own depressed state of mind, Van Gogh commented at the time on Dr Gachet as being "weary with the heart-broken expression of our time".

Dr Gachet was himself an artist, painting under the pseudonym Van Ryssel, after the town in which he was born. He was responsible for a touching sketch of Van Gogh on his death bed.

The painting was bought in the 1930s by Mr Siegfried Kramarsky, of New York, and is being offered by his widow, Lola. It has been on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, since 1984.

It is the second Van Gogh that Mrs Kramarsky has sold: the other was "Bridge at Trinquetaille" which fetched £13.75 million at Christie's, in London, in 1987.

The portrait of Dr Gachet will be sold on May 15, almost 100 years after it was finished in June 1890.

Mr Michael Findlay, head of Christie's Impressionist paintings, said of the portrait yesterday: "With not just Gachet's facial expression, but with the rhythm and colour of the entire composition, Van Gogh has penetrated and expressed the suffering in the man's soul and made it his own and ours."



Detail of Van Gogh's "Portrait of Dr Gachet", 1890.

Fewer private guards for forces' bases

By Sheila Gunn, Political Reporter

The Ministry of Defence plans to reduce the number of private security guards at military establishments as a result of lessons learnt from IRA bomb attacks on the Mill Hill barracks in north-west London and the Royal Marines School in Deal.

The reliance on contract security firms, which now patrol 36 sites, was severely criticized after the two attacks, in which 12 people died. An internal study into re-organizing security patrols was ordered after the Mill Hill attack in July 1988, and is expected in March.

The Ministry of Defence said yesterday that the internal study will lead to a larger civilian guard force to reduce the need for commercial security guards and take the pressure off regular service

personnel. Mr Richard Hastie-Smith, a spokesman for the ministry, told the Commons defence committee that the eight different kinds of security guards, including dog-handlers and porters, will be amalgamated. "We believe this is an area where we may institute substantial improvements."

The ministry's written evidence states: "The depart-

ment's policy... is to continue to use contract security firms but under much tighter control on a case-by-case basis, and subject to a regular review of each contract."

The evidence says commercial firms have not always met contract conditions.

Spending on security at MoD sites in Britain will increase by £88 million over three years.

Critic of TV plan is to run control body

By Richard Evans, Media Editor

An Independent Broadcasting Authority mandarin with 20 years' service, who has been a vocal critic of the Government's broadcasting plans, was confirmed yesterday as the chief executive-designate of the proposed Independent Television Commission which will oversee commercial TV in the 1990s.

The appointment of Mr David Glencross, aged 53, to the £85,000 a year job after a search by a firm of head-hunters is a surprise given his outspoken views - especially against the Government's plan to sell off ITV franchises to the highest bidder.

As the Home Office was being told of his appointment yesterday, Mr Glencross, the

IBA's director of television since 1983, reiterated his unhappiness with the central plank in the Government's Broadcasting Bill concerning the auctioning of franchises.

"I think the clause we are most concerned with relates to the bidding process. We are looking for that element of discretion which will enable the ITC to put the quality of the programme service right at the heart of licence applications," he said.

He added: "We have consistently argued the ITC should be able to take into consideration the quality of programmes that are offered and the quality of money which accompanies all the programme proposals."

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Court staff's errors face scrutiny by the Ombudsman

By Frances Gibb, Legal Affairs Correspondent

People who suffer because of mistakes or incompetence on the part of court officials will be able to have their complaints looked into by the Ombudsman under changes proposed to the law.

Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, said yesterday he intends to draw up an amendment to his Courts and Legal Services Bill which would give the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) jurisdiction to investigate maladministration by court staff.

His pledge, made in the committee stage of the Courts and Legal Services Bill, settles a long-running dispute between the former Ombudsman, Sir Anthony Barrowclough, QC, and successive Lord Chancellors over whether court officials' errors should be open to scrutiny.

The Law Society and the National Consumer Council have also been pressing for the change, particularly in the present climate of overwork by court officials and the large number of complaints of mistakes it says it has received

from solicitors. Lord Mackay, who is to consult senior judges on the amendment, said yesterday: "I have been aware for some time of concerns about the Parliamentary Commissioner's lack of jurisdiction to investigate maladministration by court staff."

He said that such a change to give the Parliamentary Commissioner powers to investigate mistakes by court officials was likely to "raise difficulties, some of them constitutional".

Suitable safeguards had to be found, he added, to protect the independence of the judiciary and the judicial process. Provided that could be done, he said he was "anxious to reassure people that every avenue is open to them if they believe that an error has been made by our courts administration".

A change in the law to make clear that the Ombudsman's jurisdiction extends to court officials has been resisted in the past three or four years by previous Lord Chancellors, including, recently, Lord Mackay himself.

He and his predecessors took the view that actions by

court officials were done on behalf of the courts, and therefore could not be covered by the Ombudsman because the courts are constitutionally separate and independent from the executive.

Before then, there had been a loose "concordat" under which the commissioner investigated complaints. Those had to be suspended when, as one official described it, the "shutters came down" and since then, the issue has been a "running sore".

Yesterday the Ombudsman's office said: "This appears to be a move in the right direction." Sir Anthony, who retired on January 2, had made clear that the position was "unsatisfactory", an official added.

Last night, the Law Society welcomed Lord Mackay's willingness to extend the Ombudsman's jurisdiction to activities of court officials "which are, clearly, administrative rather than judicial".

The society had received more than 30 complaints from solicitors of instances where clients had suffered financially and otherwise because of errors by county court staff.

Miller's tale comes to London

By Libby Jukes

Arthur Miller, the American writer, is in London for the opening at The Young Vic theatre next week of his play *The Price*, about a family coming to terms with the long-term effects — moral, psychological and financial — of the Wall Street Crash.

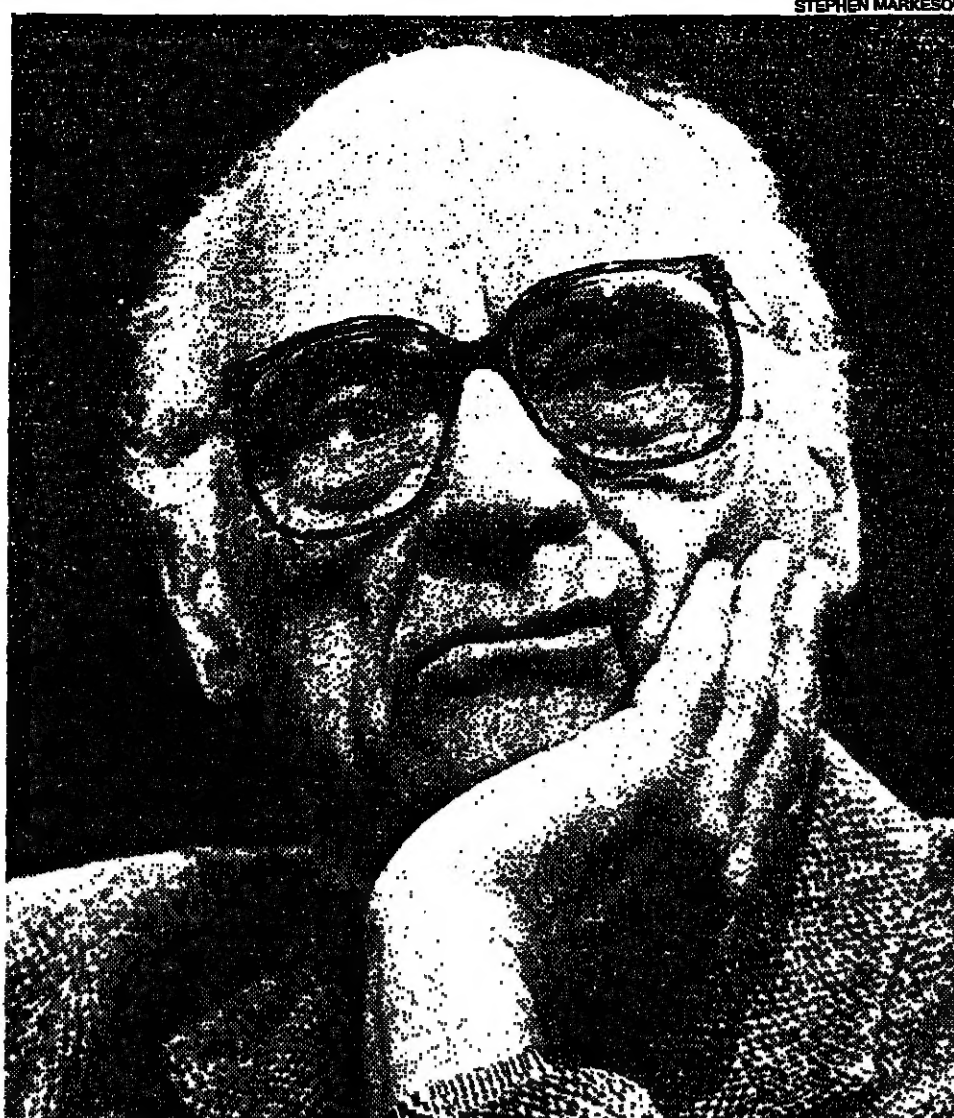
Speaking about the "collapse" of the largely commercial American theatre and the drain of dramatic talent into the film industry, Mr Miller said that unless levels of public funding were maintained and improved, "Britain will lose all these American tourists who come here to see subsidized theatre and then go home to vote against it".

He said: "This is an art which only very rarely can sustain itself on box office alone."

Mr Miller also criticized average ticket prices of \$45 in the United States, saying that "the theatre has always been at its best when it's been popular. The worst audience is a clique. You want to get in the great unwashed."

After joking that "everybody has to be led by writers", he paid tribute to Mr Vaclav Havel, the new President of Czechoslovakia.

"The playwright was the ultimate resistance because of his irreconcilability with the lies of the regime," he added, commenting on the United States security agencies with whom he clashed during the McCarthy era. "They haven't bothered me lately."



Arthur Miller in pensive mood at The Young Vic yesterday, where his play opens next week.

Air force award for naval rescuer

A chief petty officer of the Royal Navy has won the Air Force Cross for his work on two rescue operations in one night, it was announced yesterday.

In the first incident in March last year, Chief Petty Officer Julian Grinney went to the aid of a trawlerman in urgent need of medical treatment on board a Spanish vessel pitching and rolling in heavy seas and gale-force winds.

The Sea King helicopter from the Royal Navy Air Station at Culdrose, Cornwall, arrived at the scene to find conditions too dangerous for a non-aircrew medical assistant to be lowered to the trawler's deck. However, Mr Grinney, aged 38, from Hull, volunteered for the task.

While he was being lowered, he was almost lashed by the ship's swaying mast and hit the side of the vessel. Once on board, he organized the safe recovery of the seaman.

Within minutes of returning to Culdrose, he was airborne again to lead the rescue of four crewmen from a Korean ship which was drifting on to rocks on the west coast of Cornwall.

The Ministry of Defence said: "His calm leadership and assistance ensured a successful rescue despite the perilous conditions."

Building design

Energy efficiency call to architects

By Michael McCarthy, Environment Correspondent

Architects should start designing and building for the greenhouse effect, Mr John Wakeham, Secretary of State for Energy, said yesterday.

The potentially disastrous warming of the atmosphere by industrial gases such as carbon dioxide — largely emitted from power stations — can be considerably reduced by ensuring buildings are energy efficient, Mr Wakeham said.

Addressing the Royal Institute of British Architects, Mr Wakeham called for the profession to "rise to the challenge of global warming" by including in its professional code of conduct the requirement to incorporate energy efficiency in the buildings they design.

"Just in the same way that architects automatically design buildings to meet spatial and aesthetic requirements, I would like energy efficient design to become second nature to every practising archi-

tect in the UK," he said. His comments will be seen as a further clear sign that the Government, having for the moment virtually abandoned nuclear power — its former preferred response to the threat of global warming — is turning seriously towards energy efficiency.

The concept has long been urged by the environmental lobby, but Mr Wakeham's predecessor, Mr Cecil Parkinson, appeared lukewarm towards it.

Building use in the UK, Mr Wakeham said, accounts for nearly 50 per cent of the total energy consumption, which means 300 million tonnes of emissions of carbon dioxide annually. "Yet it is possible through good design and proper construction to produce buildings which consume substantially less energy," he said.

Mr Wakeham was speaking at a conference on The Architect, Energy and Global Responsibility co-hosted in London by the institute and the Energy Efficiency Office.

Professor Peter Smith, chairman of the institute's energy and environment committee, said the Government could not afford to leave action to tackle the greenhouse effect to the workings of the market. He suggested financial incentives for insulation.

Mr Maxwell Hutchinson, president of the institute, said: "I hope that this Government will discover that the skill and ingenuity of the architect is a key factor in the energy equation."



Mr Wakeham: "Challenge of global warming."

Ambulance dispute

Yorkshire two-tier service maintained

By Peter Davenport

With no sign of a solution to the 20-week-old ambulance dispute, army trucks and police emergency vehicles may now be a common sight in many towns, but in one area of the country yesterday, patients knew the dispute would have no effect on them.

Not one of the estimated 100,000 patient appointments in North Yorkshire has been missed in that 20 weeks. A full emergency service is in operation, and relations between crews and management remain excellent.

Mr Trevor Smith, the acting chief ambulance officer for the area, said yesterday: "The crews have demonstrated a remarkably responsible attitude throughout the dispute, and I have a great deal of respect for them. They are rather special people in this part of the world."

North Yorkshire has about 275 ambulance crew operating 80 vehicles from 16 stations and covering the largest geographical area of any service in the country, some 3,628 square miles.

They cover the city of York and towns including Harrogate and Thirsk, but 60 per cent of the work is in rural areas. Often the ambulance crew member is the only caller at a house apart from the millman and the postman.

Mr Smith said yesterday that his crews are part of the

community and form special relationships with their patients. They are serving friends, neighbours and relatives, he said, and do not want to take any action that would let them down.

This is a factor acknowledged by union officials and crews increasingly frustrated, and angry at the position they say the Government is forcing them into.

The relationship with the communities was strengthened last year when the service appealed to the public for £125,000 over two years to buy heart defibrillator machines for 25 ambulances. The response was excellent. They raised £200,000 in 10 months, and were able to equip more vehicles than planned.

Since 1985, the service in North Yorkshire has operated a two-tier system, with 200 staff and 35 vehicles devoted to accidents and emergencies, and the other 70 crew members and 45 vehicles running an outpatient service which moves about 1,000 patients a day. Qualified personnel on the emergency service, who have passed a special driving and aid course, earn £10,093 a year, while other crew members earn £7,340.

As a result of the dispute, the North Yorkshire crews are operating a 39-hour instead of a 40-hour week, and some are refusing to work overtime.

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Big Mac fails to satisfy hunger for facts on Azerbaijan

From Mary Dejevsky
Moscow

Moscow journalists were yesterday told everything they wanted to know, and more, about the arrival of the Soviet Union's first McDonald's hamburger six days hence, but almost nothing of substance about the intercommunal conflict that threatens to tear apart the country's southern republics.

It was a study in contrasts. After 15 minutes spent trying to tease out of Mr Gennadi Gerasimov, the chief spokesman at the Foreign Ministry, information about casualties, arrests, possible peace talks and the state of Soviet-Iranian relations, the assembled press corps was offered the prospect of bus rides to the McDonald's factory on the edge of the capital. Awaiting them there would be interviews with executives, a McDonald's notebook, ballpoint pens containing the company's vital statistics

and the prospect of sampling the first Muscovite Big Mac from the "world's biggest McDonald's" 24 hours before the first Soviet customers.

Only the offer of sustenance goes any way towards helping Moscow-bound correspondents report what has been

● The result is that reporters are cut off from the story dominating world attention ●

described with justification as the biggest of all the problems President Gorbachev has faced. Few Soviet journalists have been allowed to report from Azerbaijan. All foreign correspondents based in Moscow are barred not just from the capital, Baku, but from the whole

republic. They are also forbidden from travelling to neighbouring Armenia, which was closed off only hours after a small group of Western reporters arrived there last week. Lack of fuel at Yerevan airport and periodic strikes meant that most of them took three days to return to Moscow.

The official, and not unreasonable, explanation for the travel ban is "security". Azerbaijan, and the border between the two republics, are undoubtedly dangerous places to be. Armed gangs are reported to be roaming at will, whole regions are effectively out of control.

Yerevan — with strikes, mass meetings, acute shortages of fuel and power and unreliable telephone links — is not an easy place to report from.

The effect, however, is that foreign reporters are cut off from a story that has dominated the world's media attention

for the past two weeks. We are completely at the mercy of other people.

Official information of the sort provided by Mr Gerasimov yesterday is generally vague and outdated. Official Soviet reports on the spot are likely to be subject to the constraints of the martial law now in force. What remains is the unofficial information given by often highly partisan sources on either side of the conflict.

Getting through by telephone to Azerbaijan to check a report is a full day's occupation with no guarantee of success.

Even in Azerbaijan the situation is confused: there is a vacuum of information. Newspaper and magazine offices in the republic are taking part in the general strike of protest against the Soviet military intervention. The power supply to Baku television station was blown up — official reports say by "extremist

saboteurs", others Soviet troops — as they entered the city in order to prevent a Romanian-style revolution by television.

Radio, which broadcasts regular communiqués by the military command, is the sole official purveyor of

● Radio is the source of information for the people, but they are in no mood to listen ●

information to the people of Azerbaijan. But they are unlikely to be in any mood either to listen or to believe what they hear.

The day before yesterday the military command also printed and distributed the first issue of its own magazine called,

perhaps ill-advisedly, *Brotherhood*, a reference to the fraternal relations that are supposed to exist between Moscow and the constituent Soviet republics.

Increasingly now, official Soviet reports warn against the rumour-mongering that flourishes when information is hard to come by. They assure people that Armenians in unmarked helicopters are not about to open fire over Baku and that representatives of the Azerbaijani Popular Front — the nationalist organization which spearheaded the Baku protests — have been allowed to board and search a ship evacuating Soviet servicemen and their families from the city.

According to a widespread rumour — put about by those who say the official death toll of 83 is far too small and that the true figure runs into the hundreds — bodies were loaded on ships immediately after the assault and dumped at sea.

Hurd airs doubts after Berlin talks

From Andrew McEwen
East Berlin

Mr Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, flew home from East Germany yesterday far from reassured by talks with the country's leaders that its transition to democracy will go smoothly.

"It is actually in the balance in my judgement," he said as his three-day visit ended. "It is in the interest of Europe that it should succeed."

Mr Hurd's visit has emphasized Britain's doubts about whether the five-party coalition and the round-table process will hold together long enough to bring East Germany through the election planned for May 6.

Although government leaders have told Mr Hurd mainly what he had hoped to hear, none of them has a political life expectancy of more than a few weeks.

The Foreign Secretary made it clear that Britain would make no moves to relax its guard until there is a new government, fairly elected. Although British officials privately believe that the two Germanies will achieve *de facto* unity within one or two years, and political unity many years later, Mr Hurd treated the matter as a question for the future. He also discouraged speculation about the timing of an application by East Germany for membership of the European Community.

"I see danger in the fact that the Government of this country rests on a party or group of parties which feels a loss of popular authority," he said, adding that the widening of the five-party coalition to include opposition groups showed that the Government felt a need for a broader base simply to enable it to survive until May.

The temporary nature of the Government was further demonstrated when Professor Manfred Gerlach, acting head



Mr Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, at the Brandenburg Gate in East Berlin yesterday with Mr Nigel Broomfield, Britain's Ambassador to East Germany.

of state, said that he would not stand in the elections on May 6 and planned to leave active political life. "When one has been in politics for decades one cannot easily get out of it. It is not that easy, but I shall not hold any party or state office," he said.

Professor Gerlach, chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party, was the only leader within the ruling National Front who retained any personal credibility after the fall of Herr Erich Honecker and the turmoil within the Socialist Unity Party — the communists. The other three coalition leaders were seen as

puppets and two are facing trial on corruption charges. Although all five parties remain within the Government, their authority now rests on the dialogue with the 16 parties and groups participating in the round-table talks. Eight other groups are waiting to join.

Discussions between Mr Hurd and many of the leaders of these parties and groups have reinforced concerns about the future. Although well meaning, most of the groups have only just begun to organize themselves for the elections. The academics, intellectuals

and priests who lead them are acknowledged by the groups themselves to be out of step with the popular mood, particularly on the reunification question. Both Professor Gerlach and Professor Jens Reich, a founder of New Forum, one of the leading groups, accepted this criticism.

The leaders have been alarmed by the way the huge weekly demonstrations in Leipzig have recently focused entirely on demands for unity with West Germany. Professor Gerlach said: "We politicians have to consider the views of other European

states over the reunification question, but ordinary people want to come together as quickly as possible."

Professor Reich said that the people in the streets seemed prepared to ignore the dangers of quick reunification, even when the political groups pointed out that East Germany could be submerged within a federation.

Before leaving, Mr Hurd visited the Brandenburg Gate, which he had seen from the other side of the Berlin Wall in November. He said he was glad to see it at a more normal time, and described it as a symbol of the new openness of

East Germany. But, he added, the question of whether it should be regarded as a symbol of German unity was a matter for the Germans themselves to decide.

Although Western diplomats believe New Forum could take as much of 10 per cent of the vote, it continues to refuse to call itself a party. "The word party still sends shivers down many people's backs after what we have lived through in this country," Professor Reich said.

The group intends, however, to put up candidates and will fight the election as if it were a party.

Right-wing party emerges to woo East German voters

From Anne McElvoy
East Berlin

The first united right-wing party this week staggered to its feet in East Germany in the first serious challenge for the growing conservative vote in the May elections.

The German Social Union, based in Leipzig, is the latest group to result from the crossbreeding of East and West German political interest increasingly determining the electoral landscape as preparations for reunification become more overt.

Gone now are the days when left-liberal opposition groups such as New Forum were forged at kitchen tables and in draughty churches —

the new East German party's first press release is likely to be come from a fax machine presented by benefactors in the West.

The German Social Union is the most conservative of the new groupings wooing the confused voter. There are already 30 opposition parties and organizations preparing to stand at the elections.

Formed from several small conservative groups in the south of the country, its arrival was publicly greeted by Herr Theo Waigel, the Bavarian leader of the West German Christian Social Union, before anyone in East Germany had ever heard of it. The party is still almost unheard of outside

Leipzig where Herr Hans-Wilhelm Eberling, its founder, is a vicar at the famous Thomaskirche.

Its main achievement is to have given the Christian Social Union in West Germany — the Bavarian sister party of the ruling Christian Democratic Union — a party to support in the East after the Christian Democrats here pervertedly decided to continue in coalition with the Communists and cut themselves off from West German conservative support.

Herr Waigel, a strong proponent of speedy unification, has been pressing for some time for "a broad anti-socialist alliance" in the East

to fight off the increasingly popular Social Democrats who are also modelled on and aided by their Western counterparts.

Herr Waigel, who makes no attempt to hide the fact that his party was the driving force in bringing together the alliance in the East, has promised extensive technical assistance in the electoral campaign.

Not that it probably needs much to secure a large share of the southern vote. The south of East Germany, like the south of the West, has never shaken off its natural conservatism. The German Social Union's programme of reunification and Christian values provide a powerful draw in the

rural communities and small towns. It has also organized itself under the old structure of Länder, ignoring the current geographical division of East Germany into *Bezirke*, imposed on the country by the Communists after the war.

The very sound of the pre-war names of Saxony, Thuringia and Pomerania are a powerful emotional weapon for the new party.

The German Social Union looks likely to steal the right-wing vote from the National Party.

The National Party has always been the most peculiarly constituted and amiable of the so-called *sozialistische* parties which supported the

Communists in power. It was originally formed to put a political roof over the heads of Nazi officers and other Third Reich officials who were unwilling to complete the required political conversion and support the Communists.

Since then it has charted a path of acquiescence to the Communists' rule, in effect relegated to an interest group representing small tradesmen and old soldiers.

The past, however, appears to be catching up with the party. Herr Wolfgang Glaser, its newly elected leader, had to resign on Tuesday after his first speech proved to have unwelcome appeal for the extreme right.

Volunteers patrol Yerevan as troop airlift continues

From Robin Lodge, Yerevan

Soviet troops kept a close watch over this capital of Armenia yesterday, without attempting to disarm volunteer units who have effectively taken over control of the city from the authorities.

At Yerevan airport a succession of Ilyushin 76 transports landed on Tuesday night with troop reinforcements, while an armoured car flushed a searchlight over busloads of outgoing passengers.

"They were landing all day yesterday and the day before — hundreds of troops, tanks and guns," an airport official said. Other officials said, however, that some troops were also being flown out.

The military flights continued despite bad weather and fuel shortages, blamed by officials on the six-month Azerbaijan blockade of Armenia, which delayed civilian planes for up to 24 hours.

Convoys of army lorries could be seen late on Tuesday heading from the airport towards the city, but none were to be seen in the centre.

Groups of armed men gathered outside the headquarters of the Armenian National Movement, the unofficial organization which has supervised the recruitment of volunteers to fight on the Azerbaijani border.

A few streets away, how-

ever, the stolen field guns and armoured vehicles which had been lined up outside the movement's self-styled Armenian National Army base had vanished.

Volunteers, refusing to give their names, said the heavy equipment had been returned to the state, apparently as a gesture of reconciliation, but *Izvestia* reported that attempts to steal army equipment were continuing.

The Soviet government newspaper added that raiders at the Yerevan war museum had escaped with broken-down tanks, heavy guns and machine-guns.

Mr Gennadi Gerasimov, the Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman, told reporters in Moscow yesterday that more than 5,000 weapons had been stolen in Armenia in the past two days.

Many residents said they feared similar action to that in Baku, the Azerbaijan capital, when troops stormed the city on Saturday to crush a nationalist revolt. About 100 people were killed, according to the official count.

Azerbaijani journalists said many people were staying away from work in the republic in protest, despite a ban on strikes imposed under a military decree on Tuesday.

(Reuters)

Polish communists' coffers yield £44.2m

Warsaw (Reuters) — Poland's communist party, facing a storm of demands to surrender its wealth, admitted yesterday that it had amassed a real estate empire worth tens of millions of pounds during its 45 years in power.

The Polish United Workers Party owned buildings, holiday centres, vehicles, publishing houses, printing presses and machinery worth more than £44.2 million, a party official told the communist daily, *Trybuna Ludu*.

The admission, three days before the party plans to disband and form a non-Marxist party, followed a wave of sit-ins by radicals demanding the return of buildings to the state and a proposal in Parliament to nationalize all the party's assets.

The Solidarity-led Government joined the campaign yesterday, saying it was setting up a commission to study the legal status of assets held by the communists and allied parties "and to recover state property". Bowing before the

uproar, *Trybuna Ludu* disclosed the extent of the party's wealth, revealing that it owned or occupied 463 buildings before losing power to Solidarity last year.

Of these, it said 13 were fully-owned, 171 had been built by the party on state land and the rest were state-owned or leased from the state with allied parties.

"At the end of 1988, party property (real estate) was valued at 32.1 billion zlotys (\$64 million) at the 1988 exchange rate," Mr Andrzej Hajkowski, the party's deputy director for economic affairs, said. Party vehicles, printing presses and machinery were valued at 4.4 billion zlotys.

More than 130 deputies in the 460-seat Sejm (lower house) support a Bill presented by a right-wing Catholic deputy to nationalize all the party's assets. It is due to be debated on Thursday.

The party lost huge state subsidies and tax breaks after Solidarity took power last September.

Turmoil in Eastern Europe stirs hopes of forgotten monarchs

By Alan Hamilton

With a hurricane of change sweeping through the nations of the Warsaw Pact, the scattered remnants of Eastern Europe's former monarchies are sniffing the unaccustomed air in the hope of catching the scent of something other than socialism.

Although the only true begetter of such breathtaking change is President Gorbachev, claimants to long-dissembled thrones see the present maelstrom of political activity as the last chance to grasp their birthright before Eastern European monarchy is consigned among the curios of history.

When Herr Otto von Habsburg walked down a Budapest street last year, a crowd spotted him and chanted "Long live the King". And during the darkest days of the executed former president Ceausescu in Romania, daring graffiti would occasionally appear on the streets of Bucharest demanding bread and King Michael, in that order. Overall, however, popular demands for a return of the region's crowned heads have so far formed only a thin chorus.

The Habsburgs appear to have one of the better chances of recovering at least the Hungarian half of the former empire taken from them at the Versailles peace conference of 1919. Herr von Habsburg, now a



King Leka of Albania: Waiting in Paris for his people to rise.

Bavarian Deputy to the European Parliament, is the eldest son of Karl I, last Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, whose case for beatification is currently before the Vatican.

Herr von Habsburg received a hero's welcome in Budapest at a requiem for his mother Zita, last Queen of Hungary, who died last March, aged 96. His fluent Hungarian was no small crowd-pleaser. Speculation in Hungary suggests that even if he does not return as hereditary king, Herr von Habsburg could be offered the post of state president in the country's new-found pluralist democracy.

King Michael of Romania was the

last monarch to survive the communist domination of Eastern Europe until forced out at gunpoint in 1948, and he was initially obliged to make a living as a market gardener at Ayot St Lawrence, Hertfordshire. Now aged 68, he has lived for many years in Switzerland working as an aviation company representative and keeping strictly mum on all political topics — until his subjects rose against their dictator at Christmas, and he offered himself.

King Michael is still highly-regarded in Romania. He is remembered for his brave stand against the Nazi occupation in 1944, when he delivered his country into the hands of the Allies, one of whom unfortunately was Stalin. Older Romanians have less fond memories of his father, King Carol II, a notorious womanizer who offended his occasionally anti-Semitic subjects by installing a Jewish mistress in the Royal Palace. King Simeon II of Bulgaria also ruled briefly from 1943 at the age of only six after the death of his father King Boris III, until ejected by the communists in 1946. He went to West Point military academy in the United States, and has spent much of his life since living in Madrid and Switzerland. His stated aim to return home and be hailed as "The Pacific" seems somewhat remote.

Crown Prince Alexander of Yugo-

slavia, an insurance company representative, lives in London with his Greek second wife, although his family have no great reason to love the British. His father, King Peter, fled the Nazi occupation in 1941, ending up at Clarendon Hotel in London and confidently expecting to return home at the end of the War. But Churchill chose to favour Tito's partisans instead, and the Yugoslav monarchy fell.

By tradition, any heir to that throne must be born on Yugoslav soil. The difficulty of Crown Prince Alexander being born in Clarendon's in 1945 was resolved by having the bedroom declared the official office of the Yugoslav Government-in-exile. A Slovenian magazine recently nominated Prince Alexander man of the year, thus giving him some slight hope of an eventual return.

He might, however, find a rival claimant for at least one part of his country. King Nicholas II of Montenegro, born in 1944 and currently living in Paris, created a considerable stir of interest when he returned last year for the burial of his father Nicholas I. But the Montenegrin royal family have not reigned since 1921, their chances of recovering the throne must be regarded as slight.

Infinitely more self-confident is the self-styled King Leka of Albania, who declared in Paris this week that

it would take only four or five days of popular revolution to overthrow Europe's last bastion of Stalinism, and that he was willing to head an army to do it. King Leka, 50, recently flew from his home in South Africa where he is a "businessman" (reportedly mainly dealing in arms) to tour European capitals in support of his cause.

King Leka, son of the late King Zog, who was ousted by Mussolini's occupation in 1939, is a seven-foot tall graduate of Sandhurst, who believes the Albanian communist leadership is "very jittery" in the current climate.

Lastly, but far from least, there is a man living in Paris who awaits the day when he can become Tsar of all the Russians. Grand Duke Vladimir, aged 72, head of the Imperial House of Romanov, attended a fund-raising ball for a new Russian Orthodox Church in London only last week, and between the band's repeated playing of "God Preserve the Tsar", declared that the Russian people would think quite seriously about a monarchical form of government, as something for them to rally round.

Vladimir's father, Grand Duke Kyril, a cousin of the last Tsar, Nicholas II, managed to escape through Finland while Nicholas' family were arrested and subsequently murdered by Bolsheviks in 1918.



Former glory: A regal pose in 1938 by the then Crown Prince Michael of Romania, now living in Switzerland.

THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM

Clash sparks fears of new ethnic unrest in Kosovo

From Dassa Trevisan, Belgrade

Yugoslav police used teargas and water-cannon against ethnic Albanian demonstrators in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, yesterday, the Tanjug news agency said, giving rise to fresh fears of bloodshed in the troubled region, where at least 30 people were killed during a riot last year.

Witnesses said yesterday's mainly young demonstrators, estimated by journalists at the scene to total some 40,000, were demanding democracy, a multi-party system, the lifting of the emergency measures imposed after last year's

referendum for a multi-party system in the region, which suggests that, while alternative parties are being legalized in other parts of Yugoslavia, the Albanians in Kosovo are still deprived of such a right.

One of the issues which provoked fears, controversy and confrontations between the Slovenes and the Serbs was the policy now imposed in the region, with the Slovenes insisting that repressing, rather than pacifying, the Albanians would stiffen their resistance, and the Serbs accusing the Slovenes of lending support to Albanian separatists and thereby encouraging the nationalists.

Athens — Ten political refugees from Albania, chained themselves to the iron railing of the Albanian Embassy here yesterday and declared a hunger strike to protest human rights violations in their country, and an Albanian minister's visit to Athens (Mario Modiano writes). Police tried to saw off their fetters. The refugees resisted, saying they would stay there until Albania reformed.

All proposals for an amnesty of political prisoners in general and of Mr Azem Vllasi, the former regional party chief who is now on trial, in particular met with a prompt rejection by the Serbian delegates at the congress, at which they were in the majority.

There has been pressure from other parts of Yugoslavia to have Mr Vllasi's case thrown out of court, but such pleas, too, were ignored or rudely dismissed by the Serbs as interfering with justice.

deaths, the release of political prisoners, and an end to political trials now in progress.

The fresh protests began on Tuesday night after the ruling Yugoslav League of Communists' party congress was suspended when the Slovene delegation walked out in protest, freezing all ties with the leadership and provoking a crisis which is generally regarded as marking the party's demise.

The emergency measures of last year have been considerably relaxed, but a ban on public gatherings is still in force. Despite this, the police have recently made no attempt to intervene to break up demonstrations.

Mr Rahman Morina, the party's regional leader in Kosovo, who addressed the crowd in front of the party headquarters, was shouted down and jeered. The Albanian students kept on raising their fists and shouting "Traitor, traitor", "Freedom, democracy", and "Equality for the Albanians".

The Albanian protesters have set tomorrow as a deadline for the authorities to meet their demands. If this is not done, they are threatening to call a general strike throughout the region. Organized by an association calling itself Free Students, the protesters also want the entire regional leadership to resign, a demand first raised a year ago, when strikers achieved just such a resignation. This, however, was withdrawn as soon as the strike was called off.

WORLD ROUNDUP

Sihanouk resigns from coalition

Bangkok — Prince Norodom Sihanouk yesterday announced his resignation as leader of the Cambodian resistance coalition, which is dominated by the Khmer Rouge (Neil Kelly writes). Prince Sihanouk, who has resigned at least five times previously, said he was stepping down because of international hostility towards him.

However, a wish to distance himself from the Khmer Rouge, which this week forced thousands of Cambodian civilians from a refugee camp in Thailand back into the war-zone inside their country, may also have been a factor. The Prince said he remained legal head of the Cambodian state, and his removal from that office 20 years ago had been "absolutely illegal". Prince Ranariddh, Prince Sihanouk's son, will take over as head of the Sihanouk faction. He favours closer military co-operation with the Khmer Rouge.

Arrests spark row

Rome — West German border police detained three armed security guards aboard a Libyan Arab Airlines Boeing 727 at Frankfurt airport, sparking a diplomatic row between the two countries (Ian Murray writes). The three were arrested after the aircraft was searched on its arrival from Tripoli on Tuesday, with 125 passengers aboard. They were armed with pistols which, the West German authorities insist, they were not authorized to carry. According to security sources here, the plane had been searched after a tip-off that terrorists might be aboard. The guards were later released.

Refugee compromise

A compromise proposal that would allow any new Vietnamese refugees arriving in Hong Kong to be repatriated quickly was being considered last night at the United Nations-sponsored conference in Geneva on the boat people's fate (Michael Knipe writes). The compromise, put forward by Canada, would meet the objection raised by Britain that a 12-month moratorium on forced repatriations would not meet the problems of an influx of refugees expected when the sailing season resumes. A working group from the steering committee of the 18-nation Conference on Indochina Refugees met late into the night to try to reach a compromise on the issue.

Canal worker killed

Panama City (Reuters) — A gunman shot and killed a senior American employee of the Panama Canal during a robbery at his home on Tuesday night in Panama City, Miss Willie Friar, a spokeswoman for the Panama Canal Commission, said yesterday. He died early on Wednesday at a US Army hospital. His wife and son were in the house at the time. Miss Friar said the American's identity had not been released but that he was acting chief financial officer for the Canal Commission, its fourth highest position.

Israel jails 'Strangler'

Tel Aviv (Reuters) — The Tel Aviv District Court yesterday jailed for life Muhammad Halabi, aged 32, a Palestinian known as the "Tel Aviv Strangler" who claimed he murdered four Jews and three Arabs to prove he was not a collaborator with Israel. He was given seven consecutive life sentences for the murders in the Tel Aviv area last October of five women and two men who were mostly prostitutes, drug addicts and petty criminals. Police said Halabi confessed while his brother, Mr Mahmoud Halabi, was facing trial in connection with the crimes.

Father wins parole

New York — A man who set alight and disfigured his son, aged six, after an argument with his ex-wife, was being released on parole in California yesterday after serving half of a 13-year jail sentence, despite fears that he would attack the boy again (James Bone writes). Charles Rothenberg is to be electronically tagged and accompanied by a parole officer 24 hours a day at a cost of \$18,000 (£10,900) a month.

Hungry Romanians await EC food convoy



Romanian children, many of whose parents were killed in the revolution which overthrew the dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, now sleep two to a cot in this orphanage in the Brasov area. Most show clear signs of malnutrition, while many have sores, lice and infections, aggravated by appalling sanitation.

By Daniel Treisman

A convoy of four lorries is due to leave Southampton this morning to deliver 80 tonnes of donated food and clothes to the hungry in small towns and villages in the Carpathian Mountains of Romania.

The convoy, organized by the Romanian Starvation Project, will meet up with another leaving from Munich on January 30.

The relief workers found wide-

spread malnutrition, most severe in old age homes, hospitals and orphanages, on a trip to 22 villages earlier this month.

Volunteers will hand out 20,000 parcels, each containing enough staple foods to provide a large family with basic nutrition for a month.

On Monday, the European Community agreed to send a £40 million aid package, which would include 20,000 tonnes of beef, 3,000 tonnes of butter, and 5,000 tonnes of olive oil, along

with 125,000 tonnes each of maize and rye for livestock feed.

However, Herr Erich Fritsch, the project's European coordinator, says this may not be enough to fend off starvation. He estimates that at least 10 million of the country's 23 million inhabitants need emergency food aid.

"Simple mathematics shows that that will work out at 2kg (4.4lbs) of beef per person."

Herr Fritsch's collaborator in London, Mr Bill Ryan, says he sees a

Dunkirk spirit in Britain. The project plans to send another convoy of supplies in mid February.

A charity appealed yesterday for cash to help introduce modern abortion and contraceptive methods to Romania. A spokesman for the Marie Stopes International family planning organization said "many thousands" of women had died or been permanently injured undergoing illegal operations because abortion and contraception had been banned.

Hungary admits it broke law on bugging

From Ernest Beck, Budapest

The Hungarian Interior Ministry admitted yesterday that its internal security service had continued covert surveillance of legalized opposition parties until mid-January, confirming allegations which led to the "Danubegate" bugging scandal and the resignation of the Interior Minister.

Mr Zoltan Pal, the acting Interior Minister, told Parliament that although such activities were technically illegal when Hungary became a democratic republic last October, the bugging of telephones and flats went on because of "old reflexes" and a series of 70 secret decrees enacted in the early 1970s.

In a detailed report on the affair, Mr Pal said that a wide range of groups, from the liberal League of Young Democrats to the right-wing Janos Kadar Society, had been monitored. Documents relating to the scandal continued to be shredded until last week, despite an earlier government order to stop the destruction and to secure all files for investigation.

Explaining the operation of the security service under the former one-party state, Mr Pal said: "The objective was to gather information on groups and persons and related events whose activities and world outlook was undesirable and qualified as harmful to the existing ideology."

The report did not provide a clear picture of who ordered the bugging to continue.

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Electoral sparring as Kaifu dissolves Japan Parliament

From Joe Joseph, Tokyo

The Japanese Government dissolved Parliament yesterday to prepare for a general election that will decide whether Mr Toshiki Kaifu will be replaced by Japan's fourth Prime Minister in less than a year. The vote will also determine whether the Japanese are fed up enough with the ruling Liberal Democrats to end their 34-year stranglehold on power.

An election on February 18 will officially be called on February 3, but the sparring began as soon as MPs heard of the dissolution.

Most commentators expect the Government, though not necessarily Mr Kaifu, to pull through. But predictions have become risky in Japan, a country once so steady in its voting habits that political bookmakers had little to do. Over the past year behaviour once taken for granted has raised eyebrows and there have been upsets at the polls. Next month's vote could be close.

The Recruit bribery scandal made Japan's money-hungry politics look dated. Mr Sosuke Uno's philandering with bar hostesses was exposed at a time when Japanese women were struggling for a voice and angry about a new sales tax. Mr Uno was eased out of his job in 69 days.

Neither episode reflected well on the Liberal Democratic Party and led to its humiliation by the opposition Socialists in upper house elections last July. Farmers' anger about the Liberal Democrats' promise to import more US farm products was also a big vote-loser.

The panic at top party dining tables through the autumn was whether the Socialists could repeat the trick in polls for the lower house, the more influential chamber.

But the Socialists' recent slide in opinion polls, fading memories of the Recruit mess, the Japanese people's innate conservatism and the bad publicity that recent events in Eastern Europe have given to socialism, seem to suggest that the smart money will be on the Liberal Democrats.

Although it could muddle through with an opposition

coalition, the Socialists are not even putting up enough candidates to gain power single-handedly even if all of them won. That says as much about the Socialists' amateurish electoral machinery — rusty after 34 years in the political wilderness — as about its appeal.

The Liberal Democrats yesterday also received a powerful endorsement when Mr Eishiro Saito, chairman of the Federation of Economic Organizations, the Keidanren, warned that the elections would decide Japan's destiny in the 21st century and said Japan's "miraculous economic growth" since the war had been based on "stable politics championed by the LDP". But this does not mean that the party has much hope

Moon mission

Tokyo (Reuters) — Japan launched a spacecraft last night in a bid to become the third nation to send a craft into orbit around moon. The Muses-A spacecraft, part of Japan's ambitious plan to exploit the commercial resources of outer space, blasted off at 11.46 GMT carrying two satellites that will reach the moon on March 18, an official of the Government's Institute of Space and Astronautical Science said.

of retaining, let alone increasing, the 294 seats it holds in the 512-seat lower house. It wants more than 270 seats to keep its head up, but needs 257 to maintain its majority. The signs are that the party will not get what it wants, but may get what it needs.

In that sense, the threat to Mr Kaifu's political future comes more from within his own ranks than from the opposition. Mr Kaifu is amiable and eloquent but has no strong following within his own party. He was plucked from obscurity last autumn to replace Mr Uno for three reasons: he was untainted by Recruit (he was too unimportant to woo); he had no geishas in his cupboard; and having no power centre of his own within the party, he could be

pushed sideways when the time came for his seat-warming role to end.

Mr Noboru Takeshita, who hurled Japan into political confusion last summer when he was forced to resign over the Recruit affair, remains the most influential powerbroker within the Liberal Democrats, a party in which factional warlords circulate power among themselves.

Mr Uno and Mr Kaifu, in turn, were both controlled by Mr Takeshita who, if he did not rule himself, still had the clout to choose who did. Mr Takeshita recently reminded everyone who was boss by announcing the likely election date, usually the Prime Minister's prerogative. That Mr Kaifu was, at the time, making a statesman's tour of Europe only made him look more ineffectual at home and abroad.

Mr Takeshita had planned for Mr Shintaro Abe, the former Foreign Minister, to succeed him. That strategy was derailed by the Recruit scandal, which smeared Mr Abe along with the rest of the party elite.

Now Mr Abe, aged 65, is getting fidgety. He is not in good health and he fears that the longer Mr Kaifu stays at the helm, the less chance there is that a crusty member of the *ancien régime*, such as Mr Abe, will succeed him. Younger Liberal Democrats have eyes on the job.

In a dramatic re-entry on to the political stage, Mr Abe met President Gorbachev in Moscow earlier this month, grabbing the Japanese newspaper headlines that Mr Kaifu was expected on his travels through Europe. The fact that Mr Gorbachev was said to have cancelled his meetings with foreigners added to Mr Abe's prestige.

Mr Kaifu may have to stand down if the Government only just scrapes through. If he does, Mr Abe will be ready to take the reins.

A better-than-expected result for the party could extend Mr Kaifu's lease until November, when the party votes for its President-cum-Prime Minister. Mr Abe will still be waiting.

'Witchcraft' brews up a storm for Ortega

From Charles Bremner, Managua

When he used to denounce Nicaragua as an appendage of the Evil Empire, President Reagan surely never envisaged Lucifer stalking the aisles as a delegate at the international conference centre in Managua.

However, outraged clergymen say that is the prospect that threatens this revolutionary state if the Government Institute of Culture goes ahead with a plan to hold a gathering on the occult arts, or a "witchcraft congress", in March.

Matters such as the bitter campaign for next month's make-or-break elections are being put aside as, from the salons of the Sandinista leadership to the cottages of the countryside medicine-women, they are taking up positions on the "Congreso Brujo", an idea dreamed up by Señora Rosario Murillo, the poetess wife of President Ortega, and de facto Culture Minister.

Señora Murillo, aged 38, a striking, British-educated woman whose membership of the left-wing, literary jet-set has never sat well with the more orthodox members of the Sandinista Front, insists that magic has played a big role in the people's struggle against the United States-backed Contra forces.

She said: "Magic is not just the ability to make horoscopes, practise palmistry, magic is also the outlook held by the artists and the people in general towards the war."

She explained to *Nuevo Diario*, the hard-line pro-Sandinista newspaper, that she came up with the idea of inviting foreign practitioners and experts to share their thinking.

However, the scheme has proved something of an embarrassment to her guerrilla husband, not the first president to suffer recently from his wife's interests in the dark sciences.

The dabblings of President Ortega's wife, no matter how benign, hardly help bolster his efforts to fight off the challenge from Señora Violeta Chamorro, his US-financed opponent.

A group of evangelical pastors last week demanded that he call off an idea that would only visit calamity on the nation. Brandishing a Bible in one hand, the Reverend Felix "Eddie" Murillo shouted at



Señora Murillo, Nicaragua's First Lady, insists magic 'has a role in the people's struggle'.

the President: "It's diabolical."

He said Nicaragua would be visited by satanic demons from Bulgaria, England and other nations. "That is why we had the earthquake in Nevada del Ruiz," he said, referring to a recent natural disaster.

Señor Ortega, who has been honing his macho image by campaigning on horseback or appearing with beautiful women on his arm, reminded Señora Murillo — no relation to his wife — that the constitution permitted freedom of religion and that in earlier

times Protestant evangelicals were persecuted.

He said: "There are witches and there are witchers." Apparently referring to the distinction between black and white magic. "If you are with God, you have nothing to fear."

Other pastors supported the President. Señor José Alguera, of the Church of the Queen of Christ, said his colleague was being unfair because "there are no sorcerers in the Cabinet of the Sandinista Liberation Front".

Don Francisco Ramirez Rivera, a retired minister, said

he did not oppose the congress, although "I am sure of one thing, and that is that Lucifer will be sitting tranquilly in the Olof Palme Conference Centre because his sorcerer friends will be paying homage to his person."

Magic and superstition have always exerted a strong hold on the mainly rural societies of Central America, and it has been largely tolerated by the Roman Catholic Church. A party source said when *Barricada*, the organ of the Sandinista party, mentioned the Chinese New Year

recently, it was inundated with letters asking it to publish full Chinese horoscopes.

Traditional healing women still hold sway in the villages of Nicaragua, practising an art that extends well beyond herbal medicine into the domain of spells and potions.

Another Nicaraguan poetess and former party official said: "Rosario has always been fascinated and terrified by *brujos*." She added that she was told recently in Peru that she was a reincarnation of a famous eighteenth-century English witch.

The poetess said Nicaragua's magical traditions stem mainly from the old Indian traditions on the Pacific Ocean side of the country, rather than from the Caribbean-animist cults like voodoo.

In the interest of balancing various opinions, *The Times* set out to seek the views of a practitioner. The sun was setting behind a volcano about 31 miles from the capital when we found the cemetery that marked Dirid, the hillside village of Señora Lastenia Guevara, a dignified old countrywoman known in her community as a good "brujita", or witch.

Black buzzards wheeled over the lagoon near by, a crater lake from which local witches are said to summon an evil wind. Modestly describing herself as simply a healer, Señora Guevara, a delicate woman with deep brown eyes, said she did not think much of the congress. She said: "That's more for the educated people, the well-read ones in Managua."

There was nothing mysterious about her art, taught to her by her mother who died 43 years ago. All the time holding a leaf against her neck to cure her rheumatism, Señora Guevara explained the simple kinds of medicine she performed. For example, if a drunkard looks on a child, he refreshes himself from the child and the child's head burns. You have to mix basil and rum and rub it on the head.

For a fuller briefing on the art, Señora Guevara recommended her colleague Señora Tita Mendez, who was to be found in a green-washed cottage up the dusty road past all the Sandinista "victory" slogans. "I am not receiving," Señora Mendez snapped, before expelling her visitors to the amusement of locals who had gathered nearby.

Bush facing setback in Congress over policy on China

From Susan Elliott, Washington

President Bush yesterday defended his veto of legislation that would permit up to 32,000 Chinese students to remain in America once their visas expire.

However, the House of Representatives, which voted unanimously in favour of the Bill last November, was expected easily to override this veto by the required two-thirds majority late yesterday.

Such a move would be the first of his presidency and an embarrassing bipartisan criticism of his foreign policy towards China.

Mr Bush said he would guarantee the stay of Chinese students in the United States who feared persecution if forced to return to their homeland. But he said he preferred to use his administrative powers to allow them to remain, rather than signing legislation that would alienate the Chinese authorities.

"I want to keep contact. I do not want isolation," he said. Members of the legislative and executive bodies who oppose the veto want legislation to

protect the students because a comparable administrative action could be reversed by President Bush or a successor.

"The Bill is totally unnecessary," Mr Bush said, warning that legislation could prompt the Chinese Government to cut off all future educational exchanges. "The long-term consequences are potentially great."

Having discounted the possibility of getting the support of Democrat-led Congress, Mr Bush pinned his hopes on Senate Republican leaders, whom he called to the White

House for breakfast in a last-minute effort to persuade them to support his veto. The Senate will vote on the issue today.

Mr Alan Cranston, a Senator and minority whip, said it was unclear whether Senate would override the veto. "It's tough and go," he said. Democratic Senators are all expected to overrule the veto, but the vote depends on swaying a handful of Republicans. "We would like to see it the law of the land," Mr Cranston said.

Members of Congress were angered during their end-of-

year recess at the revelation that Mr Bush authorized two high-level visits to Peking. One, by Mr Brent Scowcroft, the White House National Security Adviser, and Mr Lawrence Eagleburger, the Deputy Secretary of State, took place barely one month after the pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen Square.

Critics of Mr Bush accused him of moving ahead of US public opinion and falling prey to his personal links with China. They accused Mr Bush, who was a former envoy to China, of "kowtowing" to

Chinese leaders. "I'm not accepting the status quo at all," Mr Bush said yesterday, "and China knows my position on this."

The President has justified the trips by saying he did not want to isolate such a huge country from the rest of the world.

Congress has refused to accept his explanation that China has made concessions to the West in return for the lifting of America of certain economic sanctions imposed after the crackdown.

Mr Bush heralded the lifting

of martial law by Peking on January 10 as an important step. Many members of Congress simply viewed the move as posturing.

Yesterday, Mr Bush said that he welcomed other measures by China, including a renewed assurance to stop arms sales to the Middle East and the establishment of a variety of cultural and educational programmes.

Such concessions do not, however, meet demands by Congress for a significant improvement in China's human rights record.

Iran arms figure is sentenced

Washington (AP) — Richard Secord, a key figure in the Iran-Contra scandal, has been sentenced to two years' probation for concealing from congressional investigators his purchase of a \$13,800 (£8,365) security system at the home of retired Marine Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North.

Judge Aubrey Robinson, of the US District Court, said that Secord, enlisted by Mr North to arm Nicaraguan rebels and assist in the Reagan Administration's secret arms shipments to Iran, had suffered enough.

Horn burn off

Nairobi (AFP) — Kenya has postponed plans to burn \$5 million (£3 million) worth of rhino horns so that President Moi can set fire to it personally, official sources said. The President set fire to £1.9 million worth of ivory last July.

Mandela talk

Johannesburg — Plans to release Nelson Mandela and begin negotiations with black leaders on constitutional reforms dominated the agenda of yesterday's meeting of the South African Cabinet.

Bomber dies

Istanbul (Reuters) — A bomber died trying to blow up the Istanbul stock exchange, police said. The man, aged 34, died after a bomb exploded in his hands at the exchange. Two other bombs were found 20ft from the street entrance, they added.

Fasters critical

Madrid (Reuters) — Four left-wing Spanish guerrillas on a 56-day hunger strike in prison are reported to be critically ill. Hospital sources say doctors have been preparing to force-feed two of them in the Basque city of Vitoria.

Syria admits

Ankara (Reuters) — Turkey said that Syria had accepted responsibility for downing a civilian plane in Turkish airspace last October.

Rapist aged 12

San Leandro (AFP) — A boy aged 12 told California police that a television inspired him to rape his step-sister, aged five, police here said. The boy was charged with rape, incest, and lewd and lascivious acts on a child under 14.

Death penalty shocks Australia

Canberra (AP) — Mr Michael Tate, the Australian Minister of Justice, expressed shock yesterday at the sentencing to death in Florida of James Savage, an Australian of aboriginal descent.

A spokesman for Mr Tate said the Labor Government was considering what additional action it could take, pointing out that the Government had spent Aus\$50,000 (about £25,000) to fly eight witnesses to Florida to speak on Savage's behalf at his trial.

Judge Lawrence Johnston rejected an 11-to-one jury recommendation that Savage, aged 26, should be imprisoned for the murder, rape and robbery of Barbara Ann Barber, aged 57, a Florida businesswoman, in 1988.

Savage was taken from his mother as an infant and adopted by white Australian missionaries under the aboriginal assimilation programme of the time.



Savage listening as the Florida court sentenced him to die.

Britons told to leave Bougainville Rebels murder Welsh mine official

From Robert Cockburn, Kieta, Bougainville Island

British residents have been told to leave Bougainville Island in Papua New Guinea after the killing yesterday of a Welsh employee at the island's beleaguered copper mine.

Mr Michael Wortley was shot at point-blank range by secessionist rebels while he was clearing an emergency airstrip for the evacuation of the 300 staff still at the Australian-run mine.

He is the first foreigner to be killed in 13 months of unrest on the island, prompting the Governments of Britain and Australia to urge evacuation of their nationals.

Mr Wortley's widow, Christine, and daughter, Kathy, were holidaying with him before returning to their Sydney home. They will be flown

out as soon as possible. Last night local television broadcast messages for people still at the mine complex at Pangunu to prepare for evacuation today. They are to take the hazardous road to the provincial capital of Arawa, 15 miles away.

This marks a victory of sorts for the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, which wants the mine closed as part of its campaign to secede from Papua New Guinea.

Australian and New Zealand consular officials have set up a reception area at the Siromba Hotel in the port of Kieta for their nationals who wish to leave.

However, last night bursts of automatic fire could be heard in the jungle hillsides above the hotel. The Papua

New Guinea defence forces, according to diplomatic sources, are overstretched to halt the attacks by the rebels. After the mine evacuation, sources suggest the Army and police units will pull back from the mountainous countryside to defend the main towns.

Before the shooting, between six and eight rebels came out of the jungle around the airstrip. One report said Mr Wortley was pulled from his car as he tried to escape from the gunmen, and was then shot. Mr Simeon Siararea, a colleague, was wounded.

Mr Wortley had overseen the airstrip evacuation project which was to have been supported by Australian military aircraft and troops if the

mine was surrounded by rebel forces. As many as 20 heavy earth-moving vehicles could be seen on the strip.

After the killing, the area was abandoned and Mr Wortley's body was brought down by an Australian army helicopter to hospital.

The mine attack coincided with the destruction of a Briten Norman Islander aircraft on the east coast yesterday, which halted domestic air services, and followed a statement by the security forces on Tuesday that they had the rebels on the run.

Under the military leadership of Mr Sam Kaona, an army officer who was trained in Australia, the rebels have taken their campaign the length of the island, gaining support as they go.

Robust British cartoon characters tickle ribs of staid French

From Philip Jacobson, Angoulême

In a shining palace of glass and steel above the Charente river, M Jack Lang, France's Minister of Culture, last night came face to face with the best of British strip cartoons.

From Rupert Bear and Billy Bunter to Dan Dare, Andy Capp ("chomur alcoolique professionnel", or "work-shy boozer"), the implacable Judge Dredd and, ahem, Johnny Farpants, the cast of *God Save the Comics* were awaiting M Lang at the official opening of the new cathedral of what the French call the *bande dessinée* — the £7.5 million, ultra-modern, national comic strip centre.

The British are guests of honour

at this year's festival, the 17th, which is expected to attract upwards of 300,000 people to this pleasing little city in the heart of cognac country. And the sheer quality and range of works displayed on a strikingly inventive set has come as a considerable surprise to enthusiasts in a country where the "BD" has long been accepted as an eminently respectable art form.

As the official publicity here acknowledges, "a new wind is noticeably in the shape of a more robust social content than the majority of French comics would ever aspire to. The combination of artistic skill and pungent comment — subversive might be more accurate — in contemporary publications like *Viz* (which now sells

700,000 copies every other week), and *Knockabout* make some of the most popular comics on this side of the Channel look staid.

The reason for this, one suspects, is that in France, the BD is hailed as "art" and must be treated with due reverence — not to say deadly seriousness. One of the numerous seminars is called "Communication and Comic Strips", another "The Third World in Comic Strips".

Should one be surprised that the French comic strip business is falling on hard times? It is a relief to find that the main British contribution is to be "Humour, Nonsense & Fantasy", all about Rupert and starring cartoonists like Popsy Simmonds, Raymond Briggs and Hunt Emerson, who under-

stand that they operate in a branch of the entertainment industry.

The organizer of the British exhibition is Mr Paul Gravett, editor of the British comics magazine *Escape*. Walking around the British exhibition, while painters and carpenters worked heroically to make last night's deadline, he pointed out how the French designer, Philippe Léduc, had seized upon the theme of British comics as products of a distinct island culture.

Entering through a makeshift customs post, visitors proceed down a construction vaguely reminiscent of the Channel Tunnel, posted with early examples of the likes of Dennis the Menace, Desperate Dan (but no cow pie!) and Beryl the Peril. "Have you

noticed," Mr Gravett said, "that children in British comics tend to be more mischievous, if not downright naughty, while the French children are far more conformist?"

As it happens, the British set includes a cleverly recreated "classroom", with almost authentic lift-top desks and squeaky blackboard, an ambush in waiting for unwary teachers.

According to Mr Gravett, the works on show in Angoulême represent the finest and most valuable collection of British comic strips ever assembled. Leading publishers like the Dundee-based D C Thompson group, often hesitant to lend their treasures, have chipped in with wonderful examples of early strips, while Express Newspapers nervously approved

the loan of some of the delicate watercolours painted by Alfred Bestall for the early Rupert Bear series (insurance valuation in excess of £10,000 each).

By way of a mock-up of the Port of London, the Underground and displays of harder-edged examples of the comic strips in the Britain of the late 1980s — two street cleaners in Hackney, East London, are stationed beside the abrasive *Downside*, for instance — *God Save the Comics* arrives at what is evidently the exit point of the exhibition.

There, before leaving, visitors are left to ponder over strips commemorating the epoch-making meeting of *Viz*'s Johnny Farpants and his appropriately named opposite number in France.

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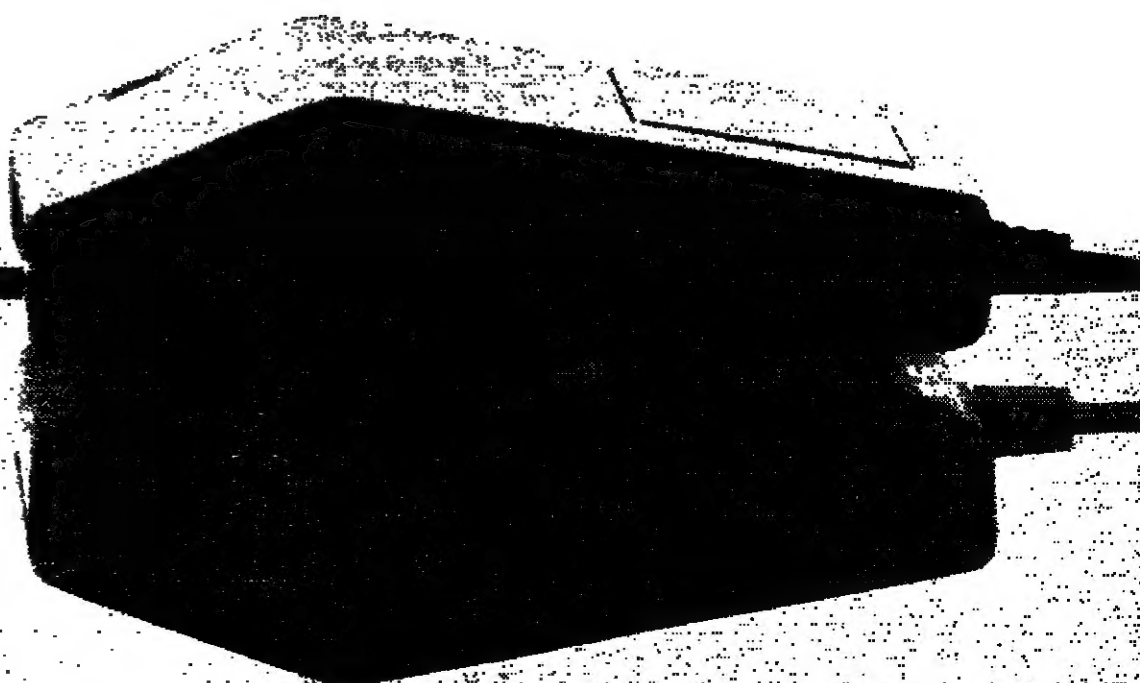
It's not that this computer can actually improve an individual. All it does is bring out the potential that's already there.

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We don't think we'll bother anymore.

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January 24 1990

PARLIAMENT

Government record on education 'is a national disgrace'

The Government's record on education was a national disgrace, Mr Jack Straw, told MPs when he opened an Opposition debate.

Mr Straw, chief Opposition spokesman on education, said that the Government had wasted the talents of a generation. He called on Mr John MacGregor, Secretary of State for Education, to wake up to the crisis in teaching.

Mr MacGregor denied that there was a crisis. The Government, he said, had backed its school policies with resources. While conceding that there were recruitment problems in London and in certain subjects, he said that people were queuing up to become teachers.

Mr Straw moved an Opposition motion condemning the Government for the divisiveness and failure of its schools policies and stating that teacher morale had never been lower.

He said that teachers were underpaid and leaving the profession while children were being taught in squalid, underfunded conditions.

The Secretary of State was blind to the scale of the problems he now faced as the Government's amendment made clear.

The House would be asked to accept that there had been no deterioration in education over the past few years, as if the mid-1980s had been some sort of golden age in English education when standards rose, choices were extended, books and equipment were plentiful and every child had a permanent, properly equipped, well paid teacher in front of his or her class.

What the Secretary of State had to grasp was that the crisis over which he now presided had not just arisen in the six months he had held office, although to some it might seem like that.

The crisis was the accumulation of ten years of damage and neglect.

Mr Richard Tracey (Surrey, C) intervened to ask if Mr Straw would state unequivocally that, if returned to office, Labour would bring back the Inner London Education Authority.

Mr Straw said that the ILEA had been gratuitously and unwarrantedly abolished, and that had made it more difficult to recruit teachers, as parents with children at the schools, like him, would know.

The previous Secretary of State, Mr Kenneth Baker, had been the master of the quick fix. He had been the architect of the lethal combination of the city technology colleges, opening out, local management of schools and the inflexible national curriculum.

The greatest test of any system was the proportion of young children who completed their compulsory state education with recognized qualifications and then stayed on beyond 16 in full-time education or high-quality training.

Fewer young people stayed on after they were 16 than in any of Britain's main competitor countries.

The proportion staying on under this Government had barely moved, from 33 per cent to 35 per cent, despite the rapid decline in the size of the age group, which should have led to a dramatic improvement.

The Government, after 10 years, had no programme for extending the participation of 16 to 19-year-olds.

There had been a catastrophic drop in the amount of investment. This was a nation of crumbling schools with leaking roofs, rotting windows, classrooms underfurnished for years, classes housed in pre-fabs, in buildings past their useful life.

Mr Robert Cryer (Bradford South, Lab) said that there were

Mr Straw, responding to an intervention, said that the Inner London Education Authority had been gratuitously and unwarrantedly abolished. That had made it more difficult to recruit teachers, as parents with children at the schools, like him, would know.

He could not give an unequivocal assurance on the future of ILEA under Labour because, unlike the Government, Labour would consult the boroughs, parents and teachers about what arrangements they thought best for the education of children in London.

600 temporary classrooms housing children in Bradford. Many had been temporary for so long that they were falling down.

Mr Straw said that while Britain's country schools were starved of cash, the Government continued its support for city technology colleges.

No programme had been such a comprehensive and expensive failure. Twenty were promised by last month. "We have three."

Most of the money was supposed to come from business but had, in the main, come from the taxpayer. Nearly every blue-chip company had boycotted the programme. The money had come from the sleazy, the falling and the second-rate.

The policy was wasteful and wrong. It should be scrapped and the £120 million spent on a grant programme of repairs and improvements.

Investment in education had been cut by central government and the system overloaded almost beyond endurance by divisive, meretricious initiatives.

The national curriculum had imploded under its own contradictions. It was forcing many schools to choose between teachers and books, posing them impossible choices.

No Government had treated teachers and children so casually. Mr MacGregor should wake up to the crisis which was all around him.

Mr MacGregor moved an amendment congratulating the Government on its "coherent programme for securing lasting

improvements in standards in schools".

He said that the Government's reform programme was based on widespread agreement between parents, employers and the public. This involved defining clear national objectives for what was to be taught, improving the relevance of the curriculum to work, improving the quality, standards and range of subjects taught, increasing and devolving choice and financial control.

GCSE had substantially improved teaching and learning. The number of pupils staying on after 16 had risen by 10 per cent in 1988. The Technical and Vocational Education Initiative had involved every education authority in introducing technical applications into the curriculum. Schools had been allowed to manage their own budgets and thousands of new governors drawn into school life.

In-service training for teachers had been improved through a £600 million programme. Spending per pupil was up 42 per cent in real terms and capital spending per pupil up by 10 per cent in real terms in the past 10 years.

The Government was on the right track, but there was a long way to go to achieve the competitive, high quality standard and performance required for the 1990s.

That was the reason for the introduction of the national curriculum and other measures representing the biggest reforms since 1944.

There was widespread support and acceptance by teachers of the benefits of nationally agreed attainment targets and programmes of study. He hoped that independent schools would take up the national curriculum.

He was getting demands for other subject areas to be brought fully and effectively within the national curriculum as soon as possible.

"I hope to publish the final report of the history group next month. Geography and modern languages will follow in the summer. I shall be making an announcement on music, art and physical education soon."

The Government was widening parental choice by pressing ahead with the city technology college programme.

There were serious shortages of teacher supply, but no purpose was served by misrepresenting them.

"There is no evidence whatever that teacher shortages are dramatically worse than in previous years, or that they are facing a nationwide crisis."

There were, however, serious problems within the overall picture: high living costs deterring recruitment in London and difficulty of recruiting in key subjects such as physics, chemistry, modern languages and maths.

The Government had spent £50 million since July 1986 on short-term measures to help deal with the shortages.

Thatcher hint on museums backing

By Simon Tait and Libby Jukes

The Prime Minister appeared to give the national museums and galleries a broad hint that they will have her support in their attempt to buy works of art.

Opening the Tate Gallery's new rearrangement of its exhibits yesterday, Mrs Thatcher said: "It is not enough to conserve the heritage, we have to enlarge it before we pass it on and that means we have to buy new pictures."

Purchase grants for the national galleries and museums were frozen at £9 million in 1985 so that funding could be concentrated on the fabric of the buildings, and since then prices on the art market for the finest works have soared beyond the reach of national collections.

The Tate's is £1,615,000. Mr Nicholas Serota, the director, announced yesterday that the whole of the remainder of this year's grant had been committed to buying a new painting by Francis Bacon, estimated at £100,000 from the National Art Collections Fund.

Mr Peter Longman, secretary of the Museums and Galleries Commission, which has endorsed calls by national directors for an increase in purchase grants, said: "I think they were off-the-cuff remarks which may have come as a surprise to the Office of Arts and Libraries, but they will be seen as a broad hint to national museum directors that there could be extra support."

Mrs Thatcher was formally opening "Past, Present, Future", a new £1 million display of the Tate's collection of British and international modern art, described by Mr Serota as a "popular" measure.



Mrs Thatcher at the opening yesterday of the Tate's rearrangement of its galleries.

MP's action 'sets bad example'

A Labour MP who indicated support for non-payment of the poll tax was criticized by a minister at question time for setting a bad example and for wanting a "free ride" for himself and his cronies.

Mr David Nellist (Coventry South East, Lab) criticized the Government for spending money on television advertisements, such as that showing a pensioner telling her dog, Flash, about the so-called community charge benefits.

There was one million people in Scotland were not paying the poll tax and they were likely to be joined from next April by millions in England and Wales, including more than 30 Labour MPs.

Whereas the minister might think that the battle had ended with last week's vote in the Commons, with the containment of a few Tory rebels, in the words of Ronald Reagan: "He ain't seen nothing yet."

Mr David Hunt, Minister for Local Government, very much hoped that Mr Nellist will carefully reflect on what he has just said. He is in a position of authority, by virtue of membership of the House.

Would he reflect that, by his

POLL TAX

action, his constituents will have to pay a higher community charge so that he and his cronies can have a free ride?

Mr Robin Squire (Hornchurch, C) held up a press release from Mr Nellist which, he said, spoke of 30 Labour MPs joining a mass non-payment campaign.

Those of us who have always been sceptical on the community charge have never suggested at any time that we would support non-payment.

"We fully recognize the standing of Parliament of passing laws in this respect. Any campaign to encourage non-payment of any tax can only be in the worst interests of this country and above all can reflect badly on the Labour Party."

Mr Hunt agreed. Nellist was setting a bad example in seeking to urge others not to pay the community charge as well as saying that he would not himself pay. He urged the Opposition Front Bench to join him in condemning Mr Nellist.

Mr David Blunkett, an Opposition spokesman on local gov-

ernment, said that they would have no difficulty in defeating the poll tax at the ballot box.

Mr Hunt: I regret that he did not take this early opportunity to criticize Mr Nellist and for not making it clear that he (Mr Nellist) would get no support from him.

Interference with market forces in recycling was ineffective, Mr David Heathcoat-Amory, Under Secretary of State for the Environment, said at question time.

There was a glut of recycled material which had been collected by local authorities. Would he agree that concern for the environment was more important than plain market forces?

Mr Heathcoat-Amory said that that had been decided to extend the environmental protection technology (EPT) scheme to cover recycling. The Environmental Protection Bill would require local authorities to draw up local recycling plans.

It was hoped that private companies would undertake the recycling. The Government acknowledged the need to encourage the use of recycled products so that their use became economic.

Mrs Margaret Ewing (Moray, SNP) asked what emphasis the Government placed on recycling plastics.

Mr Heathcoat-Amory said that research into collecting and sorting plastics would be included in the EPT scheme. The Government wanted to put more money into research to increase the use of recycled plastics.

Ms Joan Walley, an Opposition spokesman on the environment, said that everyone welcomed every Government initiative on recycling but they were no substitute for a national recycling plan. There was a glut of recycled material which had been collected by local authorities. Would he agree that concern for the environment was more important than plain market forces?

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Attempt to repeal rent Acts fails

A private Member's Bill to repeal the Rent Acts of 1957, 1977 and 1984, was rejected by 167 votes to 56 - majority, 111.

Asking leave under the 10-minute rule to introduce the Rent Acts (Repeal) Bill, Mrs Teresa Gorman (Billerica, C) said that it would "release the spirit of the kindly landlord". Total abolition of rent control would free people from the fear of renting property and would provide homes for those sleeping rough.

Mr David Wisnicki (Walsall North, Lab) said that the Bill would take away the legal rights of more than a million people. A better title would be the Return of Racketeering Bill.

Scheme to cut jail censorship

The Government is to run a pilot scheme at four prisons on reducing the censorship of prisoners' mail. Mr David Miles, Minister of State, Home Office, said in a written reply.

The three-month scheme will run at Leeds, Maidstone, Norwich and Winchester prisons. It starts on February 1.

NHS staff rise

There has been a 13.6 per cent increase in the number of medical and dental staff in the National Health Service between 1979-88, compared to a 2.8 per cent rise in the number of non-medical staff. Lady Hooper, Under Secretary of State for Health, said at questions in the House of Lords.

There were now 55,900 medical and dental staff, and 923,700 non-medical staff, which includes nurses, she said.

Less lead

Lead concentrations in the air fell by 50 per cent between 1985 and 1988 as a result of the switch to lead-free petrol and the reduction of lead in other petrol. Mr David Heathcoat-Amory, Under Secretary of State for the Environment, said in a written reply.

Points of view

During 12 minutes of points of order, Mr Hugh Dymally (Harrow East, C) suggested that MPs should distinguish between television points of order and real points of order.

The Speaker (Mr Bernard Weatherill): I have my own private thoughts on matters of that kind.

Parliament today

Commons (2.30): Questions: Home Office, Prime Minister, Motions on Scottish housing support and revenue support, EC negotiations on shipping regulations. Private Bills: Lords (3.00): Courts and Legal Services Bill, committee, third day.

£250m set aside to ease plight of homeless

Plans for house building and converting tenancies in ownership are among a multitude of schemes being prepared by the Government to deal with the urgent problem of homelessness, Mr Michael Spicer, Minister for Housing and Planning, said at Commons question time.

He said that a survey carried out by the Salvation Army last year showed that there were 753 people sleeping rough on the streets of 17 London boroughs.

Mr Thomas Cox (Totting, Lab) said that it was deplorable that, when homelessness was worsening month by month, the latest survey had been taken last year. The reports of the Salvation Army or the London Housing Unit outlined the enormity of the problem. It was caused by a lack of low-rent accommodation, resulting from the direct actions of the Government, as well as the cutting of benefits to those most in need.

When would there be real action that would end this enormous scandal in London and elsewhere in the country?

Mr Spicer said the Government accepted the seriousness of the problem: it had already earmarked £250 million to relieve the problem of the homeless, those relying on hostels and those sleeping rough.

Sir George Young (Ealing, Acton, C) said that a vigorous extension of the tenants' incentive scheme, which enabled existing council tenants to move out and buy their own homes, would enable many in bed-and-breakfast accommodation to be rehoused within 12 months.

Mr Spicer: It is the thrust of the whole range of our policies to ensure first of all that there are new homes built, but secondly that they are owned by those who are tenants. We have a multitude of schemes for converting tenancies into ownership. This combination will help solve this serious problem.

Mr David Nellist (Coventry South East, Lab) said that in addition to the Department of the Environment not doing its

own surveys, the Home Office had taken six months to write to him saying that it did not collect statistics.

While figures were 18 months in arrears, young people were being prosecuted under the 1875 Vagrancy Act for being homeless in London. It behaved the minister and the Home Office to organize their own statistical collection of information. He (Mr Nellist) was supplied with such details week after week by the Home Office Road Magistrates' Court.

Mr Spicer said that the facts were extremely difficult to come by, by definition. The issue was how to solve it and that was receiving urgent consideration.

Mr Toby Jessel (Twickenham, C) said that there were many aged under 18 among the homeless who should go back to live with their parents.

Mr Spicer said that there were a growing number of young people among those sleeping rough and it was part of Government policy to encourage them

to return home. That was the first thing the voluntary organizations sought to do.

Mr Dennis Skinner (Bolton, Lab) called for greatly increased public-sector house-building. People living in cardboard boxes in the Strand showed "the reality of the these last 10 years of running down the house building programme".

Millions of bricks were in stock; thousands of building workers were ready to be employed. They should be put them together.

Mr Spicer said that the Government was providing housing through a whole panoply of policies affecting the private and the public sector.

Mr David Evans (Welwyn Hatfield, C) said that there was enough housing in London to accommodate 10 times the number of homeless people. The long-term homeless had turned their backs on society. Young people, however, held responsible to their parents, not to this Government.

This Government had done quite enough for the homeless and he hoped no more money would be spent on them.

Mr Spicer said that the problem went deeper than Labour seemed to imply. It certainly had to do with the relationship between parents and children.

This was an international phenomenon. It was rife in Denmark. "I was involved 25 years ago in setting up Crisis at Christmas. It has been with us for a long time." It was a great problem and a great challenge to solve it.

Mr Tony Banks (Newham North West, Lab) said that in the mid-1970s in London, local authorities were building something like 25,000 units of accommodation a year. Last year, they built something less than 2,000.

He called for a survey of homelessness in London.

Mr Spicer said that there had been tremendous mismanagement by local councils of their estates, resulting in properties being uninhabitable and being left empty.

Labour criticism of Major autumn statement rejected

The following report of the later stages of Tuesday's debate on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's autumn statement appeared in later editions yesterday.

An Opposition amendment critical of the Chancellor's statement was rejected by 282 votes to 219, a Government majority was approved.

Earlier, Mr Terence Higgins (Worthing, C), chairman of the Treasury Select Committee, said that they were facing serious problems over inflation and the balance of payments.

Forecasts had been seriously misleading in the past two years in underestimating the extent of the upturn in the economy. There was now some danger that present forecasts underestimated the downturn.

Mr Robert Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyne, Lab) said that there were no black marks against Mr Major, but he was on trial. They would know more after his first

Budget. He had received an abominable inheritance. But it was a crisis that had been in abeyance for 10 years.

Sir Peter Hordern (Horsesham, C) said that he did not believe that monetary policy, in the sense of controlling the monetary aggregates, was enough to control inflation. It was important that the exchange rate did not fall too far. Here the Government was in real difficulty.

In the past year the pound had fallen 16 per cent against the Deutschmark. There should be an exchange-rate policy aligning sterling to the Deutschmark.

Mr John Garrett (Norwich South, Lab) said that the autumn statement was a statement of hope that Britain was not yet tipping over into recession when the Government's figures showed it was already well into one.

Mr John Townsend (Bridlington, C) detected a slight easing of Treasury control over

public spending, which worried him. Spending as a proportion of GDP was to rise for the first time since 1984-85. This was dangerous since every £1 billion of public spending was £1 billion not available for tax cuts.

Mrs Margaret Beckett, shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said that Mr Major had promised falling interest rates but not yet, a falling deficit but not yet and lower inflation but not yet.

When would the Government accept its own responsibility to play a proper role in investing in the nation's future?

Mr Norman Lamont, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said that the Government regarded it as prudent to reduce the current account deficit and there were signs that measures taken were moving the deficit in the right direction.

The deficit had been caused by an investment boom that exceeded domestic savings.

OFT will look at plan for merger with GEC

FERRANTI

The Director General of Fair Trading would consider the implications of the merger of Ferranti Defence Systems with GEC, Mr Alan Clark, Minister of State for Defence Procurement, said during a short debate in the Commons early on Wednesday.

The director would advise the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry against a background of consultations in which the Ministry of Defence would be closely involved.

Speaking during the adjournment debate on proposals for the European Fighter Aircraft radar system, he said no decision had yet been reached on its future but a decision was close.

The Federal German defence ministry had earlier expressed misgivings about placing such a substantial programme with Ferranti, given its financial difficulties. The announcement of the proposed acquisition by GEC would provide reassurance to those concerns.

FERRANTI

The Ministry of Defence welcomed a solution that would maintain the future of Ferranti Defence Systems as an important and competent supplier.

Mr Martin O'Neill, chief Opposition spokesman on defence, intervened to ask Mr Clark to confirm whether all the work on the radar project that was to go to Ferranti's base in Edinburgh would still go there and that none of it would go to GEC's subsidiary in Germany?

Mr Clark said that he did not know where the jobs would be placed. But if the deal proceeded satisfactorily they would be in Britain, not Germany.

Earlier, Mr Gavin Strang (Edinburgh East, Lab), initiating the debate, said that Ferranti was being awarded the radar project because its design was superior and cheaper and the Government had stood firm.

Chalker hails women's prospects in public life

By Sheila Gunn, Political Reporter

Mrs Lynda Chalker, Minister for Overseas Development, said a campaign for more women in public life, hopes to see at least a doubling in the number of women MPs by the year 2000.

Faced with only 42 women among the 650 MPs after a decade of the 300 Group, and a woman Prime Minister, she told *The Times*: "I would be very disappointed if we did not make it to 100 by the end of the decade."

As one of the first supporters of the 300 Group's campaign for equality for women in Parliament and public life, her aim is now more modest. But, in spite of the lack of progress, she sees hopeful signs in the growing number of women on lists for public appointments.

"Women's prospects in public life have changed dramatically in the last decade. I remember both in the leadership election and in the early years when Mrs Thatcher was leader of the party in opposition there were men

around the House of Commons who said she would never do it." However, she agrees, there are still far too few women MPs - barely 17 on the Conservatives benches.

But many of those women who manage to break through into Parliament are on the front benches in the Commons and Lords.

Apart from the Prime Minister and Mrs Chalker, who has worked in four departments in 10 years, these in the Government are Mrs Virginia Bottomley, the new health minister; Mrs Angela Rumbold, an education minister; Mrs Gillian Shepherd, a junior social security minister; Lady Hooper, health minister in the Lords; and Lady Blatch, a Government whip.

In the Lords, there is still sexual discrimination because most hereditary peerages go down only through the male line. In the House of Commons, the problem goes back to



Mrs Chalker: You have to be prepared to face failure

selection committees, who still tend to pick men - most often those with a wife who can be relied on to help out in the constituency. Mrs Chalker said: "There is something in the minds of

men, as well as women (on selection committees), that says: 'My goodness I could not do that job and cope with everything else therefore I cannot imagine a woman will do it.'"

Her advice to other women is to prove they can take decisions and handle other people. "When women get into managing positions, for instance, on councils or running a citizens' advice bureau, they seem to have broken a hurdle in the eyes of a constituency panel."

Rightly or wrongly, when selection committees look at *curricula vitae*, they look for women who have charge of or have master-minded - those who have "achieved". That means that women must not be afraid of failure, she warned, and they should pick themselves up again afterwards.

Behind the serene exterior of all successful women, including Mrs Thatcher, are experiences of failure. "You have to be prepared to face failure, but making an effort is the best way to learn how to overcome it."

In addition, she said, women need

to analyse their strengths and weaknesses - which is where the 300 Group had helped. "I do not think women sometimes realize their own potential. Learn to think the unthinkable; but not to be outrageous when you do it."

"Some women do set a glass ceiling in their frustration, which comes out in aggressive activity. You do not have to set up other women's or men's backs. It does the advancement of women a disservice."

Mrs Thatcher's success, for example, was no longer dismissed by claiming she is "like a man". She has helped other women far more than people give her credit for. I think she will put another woman in the Cabinet when she believes the right slot is there for the woman concerned."

Mrs Chalker's final advice to other women was to rely on doing their homework rather than feminine wiles. "I am sure Margaret Thatcher and myself have used them on occasion. But we concentrate on winning an argument on the facts and try to look at issues constructively."

SPECTRUM

A chancellor for all Germany?

THE TIMES PROFILE

OSKAR LAFONTAINE

By this time next year, a poor boy from Saarland could, at the early age of 47, be chancellor of the richest country in Europe. If the rush towards the reunification of Germany continues, then the addition of the East German electorate, with its inbuilt socialist bias, could make Oskar Lafontaine, the first chancellor of a newly united country with a mandate that would last a lifetime. He stands on the threshold of greatness — and he knows it.

By rights, Lafontaine should be a member of the Christian Democrats instead of their scourge. Educated at a seminary from the age of nine, he passed out with honours and a university scholarship — a shining example of what a good Catholic education can do for a boy from a poor background. But within three years of leaving school he had joined the Social Democrats and launched himself enthusiastically into a political career. "I never could see anything particularly Christian about the Christian Democrats," he explained later, with the blunt forthrightness which has won him so many devoted admirers — and not a few committed enemies.

But it is also part of a style which has made him one of that rare breed of modern German politicians — a man with charisma and very much the man to beat. On Sunday, he leads his party confidently into the Saarland elections, as a popular prime minister of five years' standing. In 1985, he ended the CDU's hold on the steelmaking state, which had never before been broken.

It is not so much a question of whether or not he will win on Sunday, but whether he can achieve that rarity in the splintered West German political system of an overall majority. He already has the enthusiastic support of Willy Brandt, the SPD's increasingly venerated elder statesman. At the moment, Lafontaine is deputy party leader to Hans-Jochen Vogel, who appears increasingly tired in opposition, and the SPD is looking for a new man at the top. It is due to make up its mind later this year. If Lafontaine leads the party to overall control of a state which was regarded as a CDU fiefdom only six years ago, there will be no

stopping him becoming the SPD's lead candidate for the general election in December, heading an energetic charge to sweep Chancellor Helmut Kohl from power.

That is why Chancellor Kohl will be making the weary trade to the drab congress hall in Saarbrücken tonight to support the CDU's lead candidate in the election, Klaus Töpfer.

Töpfer already has the unenviable job of being environment minister in the federal government, which makes him a whipping boy for the green lobby. He is putting an experienced and brave face on the present election campaign. He was head of planning in the successful CDU administration in Saarland in the early Seventies and he knows the area well even though he is not, like his popular opponent, a local boy.

Despite the support of the chancellor, Töpfer must know in his heart that he stands little chance of winning back the Saarland and that he will do well even to deny Lafontaine an overall majority. Kohl, however, must be hoping that he does so because opinion polls already show that the stolid but uninspiring chancellor is trailing Lafontaine badly as a popular figure. If the SPD decides to pick "the ayatollah of the Saar", Kohl knows that he will have a desperate struggle to win in December.

Lafontaine has specialized in the unexpected, almost the outrageous opinion, shocking supporters and opponents alike into thinking afresh about big problems. His thinking was behind the party's Berlin Programme, the SPD's first new policy document for 30 years, which was largely rubber-stamped by a special congress last month.

It calls for an ecological overhaul of the economy, with shorter, more flexible working hours and, in essence, Lafontaine's campaign for "anti-growth". "The old economy is finished," he claims. What he is striving to introduce is what he calls "eco-socialism".

He is determinedly a socialist, but by no means one whom Karl Marx would have recognized. His economic thinking was moulded by the Saarland, where the great steel industry which brought wealth to the region in the past was in decline. For him, the only real answer is to reorientate the labour market, with government

finance for further education and with trade unionists accepting that those on higher wages must not only work shorter hours, but must accept pay cuts to help create jobs and to compensate the unemployed. These are ideas which have brought him into open conflict with the union establishment.

His views on defence are enough to send a shiver down the corridors of NATO — but they are probably what makes him most attractive of all to the West German electorate. "We have thousands of nuclear systems in Germany already and we want them away," he says. "The discussion of balance in weapons is a crazy discussion in a situation of overall capacity. Therefore, it is not a matter of an abstract concept of balance, but of human necessity to start negotiations on removing them."

More controversial and even more topical are his views on the refugee problem created by the huge influx of ethnic Germans from the collapsing Soviet empire. Basically, he believes they should not be allowed to come unless they have a job and a home to go to. It is a standpoint that runs counter to the emotional mood of the country.

But Lafontaine sees the dilemmas growing parallel to support for the radical Right. Unlike Kohl, who is determined to hold back aid for the East until reforms are irrevocably under way there, Lafontaine wants the money spent immediately to persuade fellow Germans there that they will be better off in the end if they stay home.

His thoughts and ideas spill out of him in long, elegant, off-the-cuff

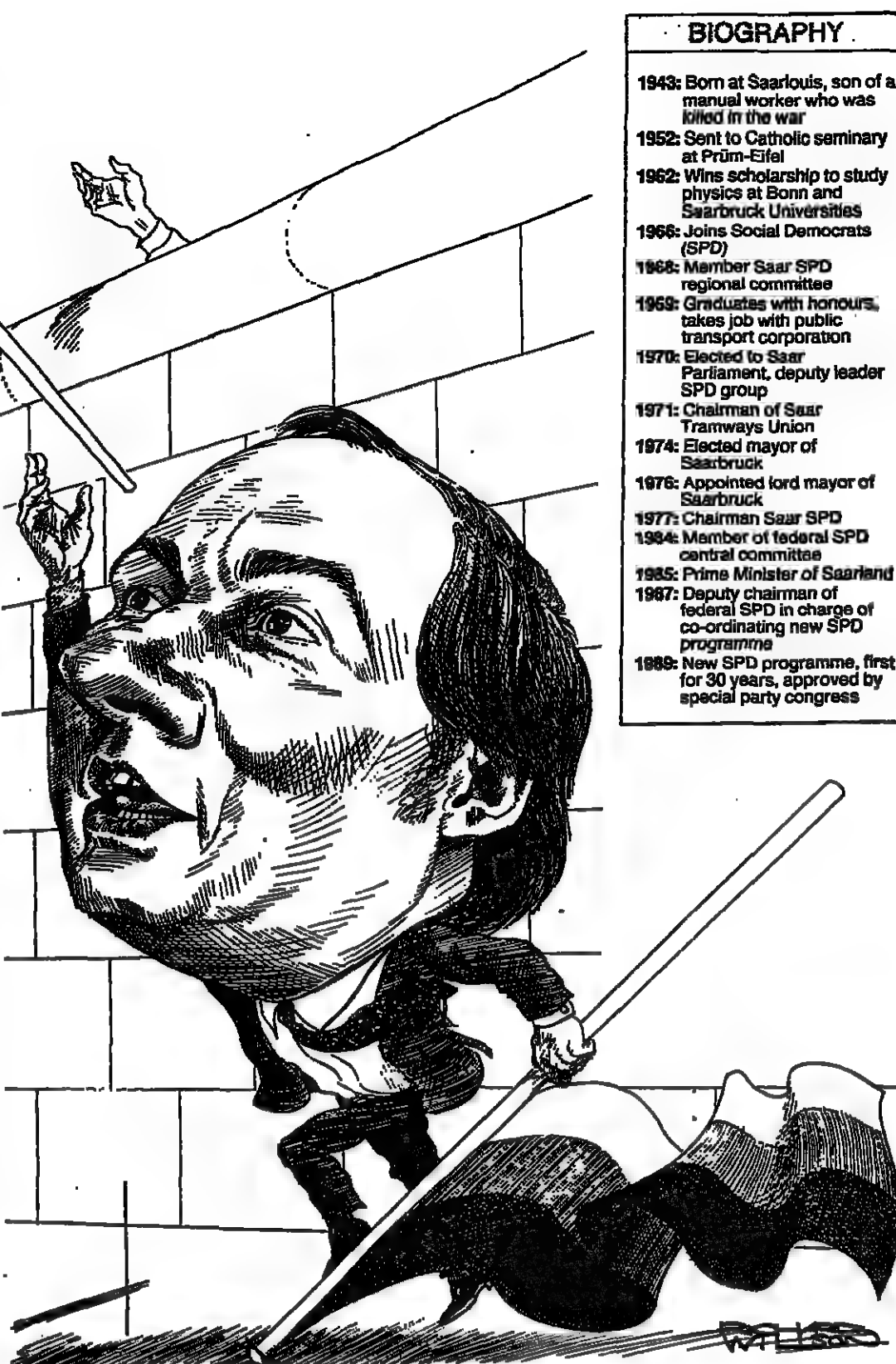
speeches. He sold his party programme to the Berlin congress in an hour-long detailed discourse, delivered with scarcely a note, which had the delegates hanging eagerly on his every word. The transcript later revealed that it was rambling and over-the-top, but Lafontaine knows how to play his audience and time his delivery. Physically, he looks something between Ernie Wise and Arthur Scargill, and he combines the wit of one with the oratory of the other.

This rhetorical range comes from his highly cultured and diverse personal background — one relic, at least, of his grounding at the Catholic seminary. He loves art and enjoys mixing with the artistic and literary world. Heinrich Böll, the Nobel Prize winner, is a good friend.

He has divorced both his wives — marriage does not seem to mix with his overfull timetable. The first, Ingrid, is a dealer in ceramics, and a head taller than he. The second was Margrit — whom he divorced two years ago amid talk that he had found a new East German pop singer girlfriend — and she is a ceramic artist. Their son, now aged seven, was named Frederic in memory of Chopin. He was scandalized when someone suggested the boy should be called Karl.

He maintains a wide circle of friends in universities all over the country and enjoys a good intellectual debate. He flashes out his ideas in books like last year's *Song of Sharing*, in which he argued his new concept of employment. On the other hand, he keeps his football boots and regrets he no longer has time or fitness to play.

Although he is a populist, he generally does not share the tastes of the masses. He lives surrounded



by books and he is an acknowledged gourmet. He hired a Paris cook for around £2,000 a month for Saarland's permanent representation in Bonn, where officials lobby for federal aid.

His critics say that he "speaks left and lives right"; his admirers describe him as a Renaissance man. He lives surrounded by books and he is an acknowledged gourmet.

But he denies that he is a high-liver and attributes his tastes to his Saarland background. It is border country, he says, and the culture comes over from France — as his forebears undoubtedly did. That is why he loves the area and why he has already announced that if he fails to become chancellor he will go back home. He would rather remain the big fish in the Saar pond than hang around in Bonn as the second largest fish in the federal sea.

Ian Murray

BIOGRAPHY

- 1943: Born at Saarouis, son of a manual worker who was killed in the war
- 1952: Sent to Catholic seminary at Prüm-Eifel
- 1962: Wins scholarship to study physics at Bonn and Saarbrück Universities
- 1966: Joins Social Democrats (SPD)
- 1968: Member Saar SPD regional committee
- 1969: Graduates with honours, takes job with public transport corporation
- 1970: Elected to Saar Parliament, deputy leader SPD group
- 1971: Chairman of Saar Tramways Union
- 1974: Elected mayor of Saarbrück
- 1976: Appointed lord mayor of Saarbrück
- 1977: Chairman Saar SPD
- 1984: Member of federal SPD central committee
- 1985: Prime Minister of Saarland
- 1987: Deputy chairman of federal SPD in charge of co-ordinating new SPD programme
- 1988: New SPD programme, first for 30 years, approved by special party congress

Of coups and palaces

One of the biggest draws in Georgian London in the 1820s was Louis Daguerre's "Palace of Enlightenment" tucked behind one of John Nash's terraces in Regent's Park.

Here, before he went on to invent his photographic process, the Frenchman thrilled audiences with his "Romantic Spectaculars" — massive 72ft-wide pictures of alpine landscapes, French cathedrals and Venetian interiors, enhanced by his special effects of sunsets or avalanches.

Often a live goat would be tethered in the foreground to add further zest. Meanwhile, portraits of Daguerre's artistic heroes, including Reynolds, Leonardo da Vinci and Rubens, surveyed the audience approvingly from the dome.

Today, after a 10-year battle with the Crown Estates Commissioners who own the property, and wanted to level it for a car park, Daguerre's dream is being reborn. Campaigners including David Robinson, film critic of *The Times*, Beryl Bainbridge and Sir Clement Freud will launch a £10 million appeal to turn the building into an arts centre, with a 350-seat theatre, a cinema, film and video workshops, a drawing school and exhibition space.

Meanwhile, behind another Nash terrace in another part of London, the Institute of Contemporary Arts, a model for British arts centres, is struggling for survival in a cautionary tale for the diorama.

Founded in 1947 by the artist Roland Penrose and the critic Herbert Read, as "not another museum, another bleak exhibition gallery" but "an adult play centre" where work is "experimental", it now staggers under an operational deficit of £250,000, and the added burden of a recent vote of no confidence in its director, Bill McAlister.

Staff at the ICA are placing their hopes in his replacement, for whom recruitment advertisements were published this week, and a fund-raising art auction organized by Sotheby's which, after repeated postponement, is now scheduled for February 22.

arts centres, as we call such places today.

The main problem is the uncomfortable marriage between creativity and bureaucracy. The artists who were originally closely linked with the ICA have faded away with the years. By the 1970s, the institute's creed had become one of liberal conceptualism, and programming appeared to centre on shock-for-shock's sake. This phase culminated in two notorious exhibitions: Mary Kelly's soiled nappies, and Genesis P. Orridge's event "Prostitution", where his rock band Throbbing Gristle accompanied the antics of a live stripper.

Loud were the howls of

artfile

A weekly look at the art world

Sarah Jane Checkland

McAlister, flat-footed organizer *par excellence*, with few pretensions to artistic know-how, but the determination to raise cash. With Cob Stenham, financial director of Unilever, as chairman, he proceeded to set a model for efficiency, and soon the Arts Council grant was assured once more. Now, 13 years on, there are fears that the ICA has lost its soul. One department head said he had resigned recently because "we were



Enlightenment: Louis Daguerre, from an 1848 daguerreotype

talking more about strategies to deal with the financial uncertainties than about the work itself."

Money problems still loom, evidenced by its scruffy interior, resembling a student common-room after a party. The next exhibition, starting on February 2, is a wistful walk down memory lane: work by "The Independent Group" of the 1950s, including such artists as Richard Hamilton and Eduardo Paolozzi.

So far, the pains that the diorama organizers have endured have been those of a complicated birth. They have fought and won two public inquiries; they have prevailed through a court case over eviction. It will be no mean task to convert the building they have now won into an arts centre, bearing as it does the battle scars of its previous functions, as a hydrotherapy centre in the 1920s, and as an annex to Bedford College.

Unlike the ICA, the diorama organizers have made financial self-sufficiency paramount, commissioning a feasibility study by Peat Marwick McLintock, and will not, therefore, have to answer to any other, larger bureaucracy. They are also determined to keep the place alive, with artists working in studios on the premises producing the work which is shown.

One question, however, is how they will reconcile the need to butter up the rich patrons they hope will sign generous cheques, and join the smart art club they plan to establish, with the need to keep in grass-roots touch with artists, who are usually poor.

Will there be a two-tiered catering system, with Freud testing the expensive fare in one part, and a booth serving nut cutlets in the other? Most important of all, how will they define the "palace of enlightenment" of the 1990s?

Martin Barrows, one of the organizers, talks of "doing the experimental things Daguerre would have been doing today". But there is a limit to the technical advances available to theatre directors and film makers today. He and his glamorous list of patrons will have to think again.

"ENOUGH IS ENOUGH MISS CORBISHLY, STOP THE SALE NOW!"

bellowed the Chairman

"But Sir — we are selling so many pieces". "Very well", he reluctantly agreed, "Extend the Sale — but not beyond February 3rd"

FINAL CLEARANCE OF NEEDLEWORK RUGS

VERDURE Needlework	9' x 6'	£1620	£935	£675
ARIES Needlework	9' x 6'	£2070	£1260	£995
ARUM LILY Needlework	2'3" x 5'	£820	£415	£245
CABBAGE ROSE	9' x 6'	£2225	£1905	£1400
POSY	8'3" x 5'7"	£1850	£1500	£1200

and many more reduced to clear

FINAL CLEARANCE OF KNOTTED & TUFTED RUGS

WILLIAM MORRIS DESIGN (Knotted)	7' x 4'8"	£1785	£949	£749
WILLIAM MORRIS DESIGN (Tufted)	10' x 5'	£1150	£555	£290
APOLLO (Tufted)	10'6" x 8'6"	£4185	£3360	£1950
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SATURDAY 3rd FEBRUARY



TIMES DIARY

ALAN HAMILTON

I have to report an outburst of thoroughly undiplomatic language in Brussels. Giovanni Saragat, the Italian ambassador to Belgium, is less than popular with both his own and his host government this morning after Italian newspapers published the text of a letter he wrote to a whingeing Belgian tourist, Guy Paquay. Having been robbed there on holiday last summer, Paquay complained to the ambassador that Italy was nothing more than a den of thieves. His Excellency, son of former Italian president Giuseppe Saragat, responded by calling the Belgian a coward, a liar and a lout, and suggesting he seek advice from a priest or psychiatrist. "By way of greeting, I wish my foot were in the place where I hope one day some compatriot of mine will really put it." The Italian foreign ministry says it is investigating, while the Belgians say they are "surprised". Ooh, these Italians are so *macho*.

Douglas Carey, a good citizen of Southwell, Notts, recently clipped the coupon from an advertisement in this newspaper inviting him to apply to his local council for a form to claim relief from poll tax. Newark and Sherwood District Council, where mutton-headed bureaucracy is patently elevated to fine art, responded to Mr Carey with a form to fill in requesting that they send him a claim form. They should be jolly well rate-capped for such waste of time, paper and sense.

Tonight is Burns Night, and the guest of honour at the traditional Burns Supper in Starnoway will be a killed Bernie Grant, Guyanese-born left-wing Labour MP for Tottenham. Come come, there's no need to laugh. Bernie appeared on his first day in the Commons wearing Guyanese national dress. It did not, however, reveal his knees.

Beaulieu, Lord Montagu's place in Hampshire, has launched an "educational programme" whereby groups of schoolchildren come for the day, are taught servants' etiquette and drill as well as how to dust, polish silver, clean boots, lay a fire and set a table. Whereupon they are assessed by Stephens the chauffeur and Paterson the first housemaid on their aptitude for domestic service, and are given a certificate stating to which menial post they would be most suited. I suppose it is harmless fun and the children will no doubt love it, but I wonder if in these days of supposed equality under the National Curriculum we should be perpetuating the class system in such a manner. Mind you, my dear, it is so difficult to get servants these days.

BARRY FANTONI



"It seems they moved 'Red Container' with those five times before discovering it was a fire extinguisher"

Lady Olivier, I gather, is still making up her mind whether to accept an invitation to open a shopping centre in Stratford-upon-Avon on Shakespeare's birthday in April — the sort of task usually apportioned to dim pop stars and three-penny soap opera players. Tony Bird, developer of the Maybird Centre, justifies his approach on the grounds that he has commissioned from sculptor John Blakeley a 17ft statue of Larry, the first since the actor's death last year. Bird assures me that the figure will not look gimmicky or out of place, as the centre is built of traditional timber and brick. Clad in his Henry V garb, Larry will stand in declaratory posture in the courtyard — crying God for Harry, England, Halfords, B&Q and the Co-op.

Irish teenagers apparently know woefully little about the institution of which their country currently holds the presidency. In a survey published in Dublin yesterday, only one in five correctly named Brussels as the headquarters of the EC's main institutions, and only one in eight could name the 12 member states. One third of the interviewees — all aged 16 or 17 — thought the removal of trade barriers in 1992 meant they would have to join a European army. However, they at least knew that Britain was one of the twelve; the British, said the teenagers, were "the least honest and intelligent" members of the Community. I suspect they mean the British have never had the intelligence to know what to do with the Irish, nor the honesty to admit it.

Early one morning some three weeks ago I flew to Glasgow; British Airways' shuttle return flight cost £163 — for which price I could have gone to Majorca, enjoyed a week on demi-pension in a two-star hotel and had an unforgettable coach tour of the island with a fish supper and wine thrown in. But I went to Glasgow, to take part in a late-night television talk show on Why Is Scottish Food So Awful? — which for economic reasons was recorded before lunch.

It was the customary sophisticated discussion: "It is," said one of the guests; "is not," said another; "is too," contributed the third. "Come now ladies and gentlemen," said the chairman; not memorable, unlikely to be nominated for an award. At one point I opined that what was special in the restaurant and hotel industry north of the border was

the dignity with which staff went about their work. "The people of Scotland," I said, "understand that being of service does not necessitate being servile"... a proper subject to while away a few minutes of camera time but a lady panellist whose first (and possibly last) TV appearance this was came right back at me to say that her fishmonger removed the roe from herrings when everybody knew that there is simply nothing nicer in the entire world than herrings' roes on toast for breakfast.

I thought of my remark last weekend. As I ate my way north to West Sound's Burns supper, grovel diminished noticeably: in

York I left my Symphony of Seafood because it was redundant of garlic — which I don't like — and the waiter approached with an Oh Calamity look on his face: "Sir is indubitably right and we are miserably wrong." Yuk.

At Linden Hall near Marpeth, which has one of the great staircases of Britain, the service was decent and the caramelized apple baked with lemon, butter, cinnamon and currants soaked in Bacardi really outstanding — and then to Scotland:

A pie shop in Coldstream — because I got hooked on mutton pies during the Hillhead by-election. The proprietor came from behind the counter, said,

Woodrow Wyatt on the failure to stand up to the students

To the banks' discredit

attitude of the other signatories. The banks are terrified of student power, seeing students caught young with their accounts as a long-term prop to their prosperity.

In November 1986 Barclays withdrew from its highly profitable operations in South Africa after a fall in the number of new students in Britain opening accounts — part of the absurd anti-apartheid campaign to compel disinvestment there. At a lunch at the bank's London headquarters the then chairman gave me the figures and told me of Barclays' difficulties with university accounts generally. The result was that Barclays Bank in South Africa was sold to local interests and has flourished mightily ever since, thus strengthening the country's economy.

When I was in South Africa that year black entrepreneurs to whom Barclays had given generous loans to set up businesses were greatly disturbed at the prospect of the pull-out.

The skilfully run National Union of Students has cowed the banks again. It is against student loans because the intention is that students will contribute more to their higher education and the taxpayer less. Grants will be frozen at 1990 amounts. Top-up loans will be provided for those who want them, spread over many years with an interest rate equivalent to inflation, which means in practice a zero rate of interest.

There is nothing novel in the notion. There are similar arrangements in the US and throughout northern Europe with less generous terms for the borrowers. Sweden has long operated student loans (less favourable than those the British government intends) because it thinks having to pay something concentrates the student's mind on getting better value from his studies and ensures that he takes the course best suited to his future career.

Also in Sweden, it is thought

unreasonable that the taxes of the lower paid and less well educated should go to provide higher education for those likely to earn more as a result. As opinion polls showing the majority in favour of student loans indicate, the masses have rumpled what is in fact a middle-class rip-off.

The British banks complain of lack of consultation when the idea of the Student Loans Company first originated with the Civil Service. But as the chairman of one clearing bank explained to me, all their points were eventually met except for the highly significant inclusion of Lloyds. That bank was against the scheme because it felt that it would give "too much hassle", particularly over the possibility of non-repayment of loans, that no banking skills were involved and that student loans would be "a peripheral activity".

The Government is justified in its indignation. The banks have done well out of the

staggeringly improved economic climate of the Thatcher years and they have displayed ingratitude and cowardice in not running the Student Loans Company. It is untrue that no banking skills are involved because the advice of the local bank manager on the advisability of taking out a student loan and what size it should be would have been very helpful.

They have missed an opportunity for strongly based long-term customer relationships. This is apart from failing to take part in a scheme to help fund those receiving higher education. The number is due to increase considerably over the next few years, costing the country approximately double the current £500 million paid in student grants if nothing is done. Without a loan scheme the numbers seeking higher education will have to be severely culled to avoid intolerable burdens being put upon the taxpayer.

The banks have done a dis-

service to the country as well as to students wanting top-up loans, who will now have to seek them by post from Glasgow and lose the convenience of going to their local bank. The banks could have owned what will become a very valuable company run by a first-class chief executive. The company will have the addresses and financial circumstances of every graduate with a top-up loan. The value of those banking connections is obvious. As this government is not enthusiastic about public ownership it is probable that the Student Loans Company will eventually be sold to the private sector at a very large profit.

It is not too late for the clearing banks to come back into the scheme. However, I doubt that they will because they run scared at the slightest whiff of disapproval from, or breaking of ranks in the face of, the National Union of Students.

The clearing banks are reluctant to take risks, except in lending huge sums without security to underdeveloped countries which have to be written off at great loss to shareholders when those countries default. However, lending to incompetent, Marxist-inclined dictatorships is popular on the left. Student loans are not.

Ronald Butt

The empire builders

Like M. Jacques Delors, the Conservative MEPs who last night joined Mrs Thatcher in a tour of the European horizon believe that the Community should hasten towards integration so as to prepare for the emergence of East European states to freedom.

They disown the description federalist, but their words speak for them. In November all but two of them wrote to *The Times* asserting that the Community must "provide a secure and stable framework for all the German people and the countries of East Central Europe..." Declaring that the argument for abandoning a "closely-knit European Community in favour of a looser grouping of co-operating sovereign states is flawed," they said that only "a strong Community" could provide the needed stability.

They could hardly have made clearer their distaste for the Community of "independent sovereign states co-operating freely" advocated by Mrs Thatcher in the manifesto on which they were elected. Their position implies that, in certain crucial matters, the European Parliament and a Community "government" should have primacy over the Westminster Parliament and government.

M. Delors wants the Commission to be a decision-making Community government. The MEPs want their Parliament to be able to call it to account. That is federalism, which is also implicit in the demand for European Monetary Union (a central economic policy requires a central government) and a binding Social Charter.

Nothing of this sort was implied when the British people confirmed membership of the Community in the 1975 referendum. But as I have argued before, the issue is not any risk to national identities, which could no more be destroyed in an "integrated" Community than in the Habsburg Empire or the Soviet Union. What matters is the loss of political accountability by manageable units of nations once they were absorbed in a vast, centrally directed and bureaucratic "empire". The danger would arise from the feeling of the nations that they were being repressed, disregarded and manipulated.

Consider the two minor but significant examples of eggs and beef. British eggs are now thought to be safer than those imported. But under the single-market regulations the country of origin of imported eggs may not be identified, though British eggs may be identified on the packing. Far from encouraging a free market, such rules deny the buyer his full, free-market right to information that may condition his choice. One may often prefer to buy some goods from one country rather than another.

Likewise, if the Germans choose to ban British beef (however remote the danger of the transmission of "mad cow" disease to humans, we are told that

it cannot completely be discounted) they should be entitled to their own judgement.

As for the argument that a tightly integrated Community would help stabilize Eastern Europe, it might well make it harder to forge suitable links with East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland. East Germany, of course, is a special case. Self-determination and justice call for eventual reunification, and whether the Community is federalist or not, there is no more reason to fear a resurgence of post-Bismarck Germany than Louis XIV's or Napoleon's France.

But more broadly, the larger the vast, centralized Brussels "empire" became, the more elusive democratic accountability would be. And what would be the impact in the Soviet Union of a new "empire" in the West such as neither Charlemagne nor Napoleon ever achieved? With the dissolution of the old order in the East, we should stand ready for new and, at present unpredictable thinking, not try to bind the future to yesterday's Community visions.

To do so would be as silly as to allow our proper detestation of communism these past 45 years to make us over-zealous of reformist communists in the USSR because they neither renounce the word nor denounce Lenin. A practical Soviet politician can no more condemn the whole of the last 73 years of Russian history than President Mitterrand can denounce 1789. Such revolutions can only be disowned by reinterpretation.

Hearing a Soviet diplomat recently discussing his country's difficulties with a candour and humility which would be startling in a Western politician, I was struck by the fact that he never once mentioned Marxism. It is a total political system now defunct. But he did several times speak of taking the best of Leninism as a creed which simply aimed at bettering the lot of the people.

Unlike Marxism, Leninism can be made to mean what is necessary — and there are Russians who now take it to allow not only co-operatives but market forces, privatization and even a system in which the state owned only, say, 30 per cent of the economy. Nor should we fear the fact that many reformers came up within the Communist Party when that seemed the best way of getting the power to take advantage of the breakdown of Marxist theory.

Stability requires that we do not leave Russia out of account in our overtures, political and economic, to Eastern Europe. It could well be a mistake to set out now to lock East European states into a tighter Community that excluded the USSR. We have to feel our way delicately towards a new European power structure, to which the idea of an integrationist Community is, at the least, irrelevant as well as being potentially dangerous to our own traditions of accountability.



"It seems they moved 'Red Container' with those five times before discovering it was a fire extinguisher"

edly, was that he had not. I also inquired whether, indeed, there was to be a tribunal at all; I was told that no decision had been taken. (My final inquiry, just before I published my article, was five weeks after the second case had ended). Now read on.

With quite remarkable effrontery, Commander Taylor, in his reply published yesterday on the Letters page, twice refers to the fact that, unlike a civil action, where the burden of proof is "on the balance of probabilities", police disciplinary proceedings require a higher test — the one demanded by courts in criminal actions, viz., "beyond a reasonable doubt". It is scandalous enough that that should be so (because police disciplinary proceedings, unlike criminal trials, cannot issue in imprisonment or fine, only admonition, demotion or dismissal); it is much worse that Commander Taylor should omit any ref-

erence to the crucial fact that the test for disciplinary proceedings was changed (by the Home Office) to the higher hurdle at the urging of the police, making it virtually impossible, in cases like the Judd one, for any officer to be "convicted".

That does not exhaust Commander Taylor's omissions and elisions. He makes much of the fact that I discussed the outcome of the civil action, saying that I was out "to condemn him [Judd], destroy his career and expose him to public calumny." The Commander thus dismisses the civil case entirely, which enables him to ignore the unprecedented award of no less than £70,000 specifically for the wickedness of what had been done to the victim.

But even that is not the worst. Commander Taylor omits any reference to the criminal case which preceded the civil one — the case, that is, in which Mr Taylor was prosecuted for having, according to Judd, cannabis on him. Mr Taylor was tried and acquitted; but since Judd had produced the cannabis when Mr Taylor was charged after his arrest, there is no escaping the clear implication of the acquittal. The jury, plainly, based their verdict on the "beyond a reasonable doubt" principle, but on this occasion Commander Taylor finds it convenient to ignore their decision altogether.

I haven't finished. The outcome of the civil action is coolly waved away in nine words: "In the event the action was defended and lost." Then the Commander slips in the news that "An appeal is pending against the quantum of damages." I use the phrase "slips in" because putting it that way avoids the necessity of revealing that there is to be no appeal against the judgment, or in plainer English that the charges cannot be contested.

It is no fault of Commander Taylor's that at the very moment when he was writing his letter, another victim of police malfeasance was receiving £25,000 for malicious prosecution. In this case, which had nothing to do with PC Judd, a jury concluded that two officers (Cooke and Deacon) had planted evidence of an armed robbery on the plaintiff, a Mr Morris. (The jury exonerated a third officer — Bailey — who had also been accused.) In one crucial aspect Mr Morris was considerably worse off than Mr Taylor, who had been verbally abused and strip-searched, but nothing more. Mr Morris spent nine months in prison before he was tried and acquitted.

And now it seems that huge quantities of documents concerning the investigations into the recent disbandment of the whole of the West Midlands Serious Crimes Squad have been destroyed. What an embarrassing mistake! A regular no-no! Such bad luck!

But I have a helpful suggestion: Commander Taylor should get hold of PC Judd, officers Cooke and Deacon, and the silly-billy (as yet unnamed) who shredded the West Midlands documents, line them up, and give them a sharp tap at the earlobe with one hand, while wagging a reproving finger at them with the other. Alternatively, when next writing to *The Times*, he should avoid words like "Let there be no doubt as to the determination of the police service to maintain the integrity of its officers and public confidence in that integrity."

I am one of those whose instinct is on the side of the police; as a child, I was taught that they were our friends, and I grew up in that belief. For many years, whenever the defendant in a trial swore that he had been framed by the police, my immediate reaction was to disbelieve him. In recent years, that sear has begun to tilt the other way, and cases like these help to push it further. And letters like Commander Taylor's, with their complacency and evasiveness, push it further still.

Ye just cannae spot the deference



CLEMENT FREUD

"You are the first famous person who has ever been in my shop, though my sister once met Woody Craig on a bus," and shook my hand. I asked him whether his mutton pies were good. He said

yes, they were. He was wrong. Hospitality in Glasgow. The receptionist said: "We have allocated you a non-smoking room on the fifth floor." There was no trace of smoke, just the overpowering smell of perfumed air freshener, and when I phoned to ask whether the water would get hot enough for me to bath before dinner, she replied "We've a lot of folk in the place tonight".

Chapelton House, near Stewarston, half an hour's drive from the European city of culture. The menu showed four first courses; I ordered "sweet, cured fillet of herring with gooseberry yoghurt", not wanting to miss what I thought might be a Lowland

speciality. Along came two roll-mops. Sufficed from disuse they were, and the relish more suited to attaching wallpaper than garnishing plates. I cut a thin slice; it was no better than it seemed. Ten minutes later a wonderfully competent local lass whisked away the full plate with the memorable words: "Did ye like it okay?" and off she went before I could say "well now..."

Willow Tea Room, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. I ordered a crumpet and got a pancake; so I ordered a pancake, and got a crumpet of a different size. I asked my waitress for a toastie — to which Judy Steel introduced me ten years ago at a Roxburgh coffee

morning — and she (the waitress, Judy Steel is in Ettrickbridge) said "We don't do toasties after 4 o'clock", in a way suggesting everyone should know that I apologized. She said all right.

One Devonshire Gardens is a hotel in the west end of the city. It is dramatically brilliant: dark carpets and walls, huge vases of red roses picked out by well-aimed shafts of light. Eighteen spotlights illuminate a three-table dining room containing good paintings, and the perfectly trained, handsomely dressed waitress behaved like your best friend's older sister. I had picked salmon then really good minted pea soup and when I had eaten most of it she brought hot rolls with such presence that were I not of the trade, I would have believed that three-quarters of the way through the soup is the exact time for getting bread.

هكذا من الاصل



1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone: 01-782 5000

A REVOLUTION BETRAYED?

Romania is on the rack again. By its decision this week to contest the first free election for over half a century, the ruling National Salvation Front has goaded the nation to fury. To the outside world the reappearance of angry multitudes on the streets, denouncing leaders whom they were cheering less than a month ago, may suggest a Shakespearean reflection: are the provisional President, Mr Iliescu, and the Prime Minister, Mr Roman, destined to suffer the fate of Brutus and Cassius?

Honourable men they may be; lacking in ambition they most certainly are not. Not devoid of rhetoric, but distrust born of a bitter sense of betrayal is stoking up the smouldering discontent. The wrath of the Romanians, which unites town and country, is on the face of it entirely justified. The leaders of the Salvation Front have arrogated to themselves prerogatives which go far beyond the strictly temporary mandate which was theirs by popular acclaim after Ceausescu's fall. By doing so they have come perilously close to conjuring up the anarchy they were supposed to interdict.

The Front has also compounded the herculean tasks with which it was already faced — preventing starvation, moderating the urge of many to exact wholesale revenge for communist injustices and delaying a confrontation with Moscow over Moldavia until the Kremlin has evolved a proper policy on nationalities. Now the threat of confrontation on the streets hangs over the scene again.

By pre-empting round-table talks between the 15 new parties and the Government, the decision to postpone the election for only a month until May 20 has alienated candidates across the entire political spectrum. Worse yet, the suspicion is already forming in independent minds in Romania that the pro-Soviet wing of the old Communist Party is manipulating the Front in order to hang on to power.

Professor Doina Cornea, the distinguished former dissident, has resigned from its ruling council, arguing convincingly that "the Front's leaders are former communists. They don't say so any more, but they are still there." Mrs

Cornea points to the "enormous disadvantage" under which other parties will labour, lacking as they do "the means to mount an electoral propaganda campaign". Despite promises — as yet unfulfilled — of help with money and equipment from the Front, all the evidence supports the cogency of her critique.

There are, to be sure, legitimate questions to be asked about the democratic credentials of some of the emerging parties. Apart from the Front itself, the two most important are likely to be the National Liberals and the National Peasants' parties, heirs of the dominant parties of pre-war Romania. Nobody in Romania has forgotten that members of both were among the harbingers and, later, the lackeys of Marshal Antonescu's vicious wartime government. But they also remember that the overthrow of Romanian fascism was accomplished without communist help. The Communist Party of Ceausescu's last years peddled a totalitarian nationalism which had more in common with fascism than anything likely to emerge from the Peasants, Liberals or other, newer parties.

It is not too late for the Salvation Front to restore its credibility. Land reform — the privatization of agriculture, not half-measures — cannot wait until after the election: in the countryside, people are starving. As a logical consequence of declaring itself an interested party in that election, the Front should invite leaders of the other parties to join the Government, as elsewhere in Central Europe. The distribution of the State's plundered assets is a task for Romanian society as a whole, not for a self-appointed coterie.

Finally, President Iliescu should ask himself whether he is still seen as sufficiently neutral to continue as acting head of state throughout the sensitive period that lies ahead. If he were to resign, who better than Mrs Cornea to succeed him in his caretaker role? She alone appears to possess the stature to become a Romanian Havel or Walesa. A self-denying ordinance from Romania's present leadership would be the best possible proof that they are indeed honourable men.

NEW FIGHTER — OLD FOE

Following the sale of Ferranti Defence Systems to GEC, a British-developed radar now looks likely to be chosen for the European Fighter Aircraft (EFA). An end to the Anglo-German squabble which has stalled the aircraft's progress for two years is thus in sight. A more fundamental issue now looms, however, and it concerns the future of EFA itself.

At their meeting in London this week the British and West German defence ministers reaffirmed their continuing requirement for the aircraft. There is, for all that, increasing scepticism in Bonn. Not only is the opposition opposed to it but the Free Democrats, junior partners in the government coalition, have come out against it, too.

When the aircraft was conceived over six years ago, East-West relations were entering a particularly bad phase. The Soviet Union had stalked out of the nuclear arms talks in Geneva over the deployment of cruise missiles at Greenham Common. The Gorbachev era was 15 months away. The RAF meanwhile had been struggling to find a successor to the Jaguar ground attack aircraft, preferably one which could also double up as a fighter. The Anglo-German-Italian-Spanish plane now emerging is the reverse of the RAF's original idea, being primarily a fighter which could double up as a bomber. This partly reflects the Luftwaffe's priority.

It also makes good sense for the RAF, which has not had a new purpose-built fighter for some years. Because of the vast air space over Britain, available air defence money in recent times has had to be invested in long-range interceptors (like the Tornado ADV) which could take on Soviet bombers in the far north. For fighting above the battlefield in West Germany, the RAF was singularly ill-equipped.

The questions which now arise are rather

different. Is it, for example, prudent for the Government to invest £7 billion in 250 aircraft designed for a scenario which now hardly exists? The British industry would obviously say yes. Leaving aside the issue of the radar, British Aerospace and a wide range of avionics and electronics factories would be damaged if the EFA programme prematurely crashed. There was, and presumably still is, a cheaper option, which is to buy an American competitor like the F-18. The aircraft might well be assembled in this country, thus saving jobs in British Aerospace, but the impact on British design teams could be fatal.

There are also military arguments for continuing. The long-term future in Europe is uncertain. The Soviet air force remains huge and is still taking delivery of new systems. If the RAF is to help guarantee British security it too must be given the means of doing so. There clearly the EFA would have a home-based role.

Will it, however, continue to have one in West Germany? When it finally enters service in six years time, reductions in British forces on the Continent should either be under discussion or under way — as part of a Conventional Forces in Europe treaty. Proposals for their total withdrawal are now being made. The need for as many as 250 EFA is therefore doubtful.

Such issues do not affect the RAF alone. Similar questions await the Army (over manpower and tanks) and, perhaps to a lesser extent, the Royal Navy. It is the RAF's misfortune that its biggest procurement programme for a decade will be the first to be measured against a new set of strategic criteria. The ministries of defence in the four countries concerned still have a lot of talking to do before it can be established whether the Eurofighter has a future.

ON THEIR HORSES

The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, "guiding force" of the world's second-oldest communist state, this week renounced many of the *nomenklatura's* special privileges and promised multi-party local elections. These concessions to popular discontent, announced barely two months after the formation of the opposition Mongolian Democratic Union put Mongolia in the vanguard of democratic reform in communist Asia.

The country might appear an improbable standard-bearer for peaceful change. Its most famous historical figure, Genghis Khan — one of the heroes of the pro-democracy movement — was a leader of undisputed political and military genius but notoriously uncompromising with opponents. The communist state founded in 1921 has proved as unbending, purging Mongolia of its Buddhist religion, destroying many of its cultural treasures and rewriting its history.

Its predominantly pastoral economy was collectivized with all the ruthlessness of Stalin (whose statue, now paint-spattered, still stands in Ulan Bator). The country remained rigidly Stalinist until President Tsedenbal, dictator for three decades, was deposed in 1984 with Moscow's tacit encouragement.

For the leadership to precede the Soviet Union in abolishing the dictatorship of the party would break a tradition of slavish imitation of Moscow. That tradition, however, was responsible for the cautious introduction of a measure of *perestroika* in 1988 by President Jambyn Batmonkh. Last month, he dismissed three politburo members for "senility" and pledged the party to "self-renewal".

The MDU is a loose but well organized coalition of intellectuals and workers headed by a 27-year-old academic, Mr Zorig — and is doubly difficult for the authorities to suppress because it is backed by the great grandson of Damdin Sukebator, national hero and

founder of the Mongolian communist state. It demands multi-party democracy, the privatization of herds and land, an end to party interference in government and the restoration of Mongolia's cultural traditions (including the rehabilitation of Genghis Khan).

Thousands of supporters, braving fierce cold and last week's half-hearted attempt by the authorities to halt demonstrations, have raised the stakes. Beneath banners carrying the fiercely nationalist slogan, "brothers and sisters, to your horses!", they demand Tsedenbal's return from exile in the Soviet Union to stand trial for "Stalinist crimes". They have also openly attacked the current leadership for abuse of privilege.

Confrontation has so far been avoided, and the MDU has called a halt to demonstrations while it prepares for its first congress on February 18. Another opposition party, the Democratic Social Movement, is however already forming with a still more radical platform.

The leadership's kid-glove response is being watched nervously in Peking. If Mongolia abandons communism, it will be difficult for its hardliners to continue dismissing demands for democracy as a "European disease". China has another cause for concern. Contacts between Mongolia and China's Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, where two thirds of ethnic Mongolians live, have recently increased in line with the thaw in Sino-Soviet relations. Mongolian nationalism could spread across the frontier.

Peking would almost certainly repress the first signs of protest. But when "Tartar horsemen shake their spears" in democracy's cause, it can only, in a country historically obsessed by the threat from the north, increase the leaders' paranoia. It was from Mongolia, after all, that Kublai Khan once swept down to found the Yuan dynasty.

Causes of racial bias in schools

From the Chief Executive of the Commission for Racial Equality
Sir, I find it almost as difficult to understand the letter from Professor Flew and others (January 22) as they find it difficult to understand the commission's code of practice for the elimination of racial discrimination in education.

Professor Flew asserts that the code is "based on the premise" that under-achievement is the result of racial discrimination alone. That assertion is untrue. We believe, as the Swann report pointed out some years ago, that under-achievement is a "multi-causal" phenomenon and that discrimination is only one among a number of possible factors. Unlike other causes, however, discrimination is unlawful and the code, as a guide to the Race Relations Act, is only concerned to ensure that schools and colleges do not unwittingly or unwittingly break the law of the land.

Professor Flew and his colleagues also complain about the vagueness of the term "justifiable". We share the concern but the problematic nature of the term derives from the law itself and not from the CRE's code and it is an issue on which we have made representations to the Home Secretary.

They further chide the commission for confusing culture with race, but it would seem that they are unfamiliar with the legal concept of indirect discrimination under the Race Relations Act 1976.

The point that the commission is making is that discrimination on cultural grounds may have a disproportionately adverse effect on a particular racial group and that, unless this can be justified, it constitutes indirect discrimination and is therefore unlawful.

It is the case that Professor Flew and his colleagues object, not so much to the commission's code, as to the Race Relations Act itself. Yours faithfully,
PETER SANDERS,
Chief Executive,
Commission for Racial Equality,
Elliot House,
10/12 Allington Street, SW1.
January 22.

Virtues of spurge

From Lord Armstrong of Ilminster
Sir, I was fascinated to read today's (January 16) learned piece by Alan Coren about spurge.

I am ashamed to say that I knew nothing of the traditional virtues of spurge as a purgative for humans until I read his article. But I have discovered from a neighbour in the country the effectiveness of spurge in repelling moles. When we suffered a rash of molehills on our lawn recently, she advised us to plant some spurge in the most recently excavated molehill. It worked like a dream: I planted a sprig or two of spurge as instructed, and — hey presto — no more molehills.

I do not know whether it has anything to do with the acid milky juice to which Alan Coren refers, but, pursued with spurge, the moles have softly and silently vanished away, without my having to burden my Kenneth Grahame-induced conscience with the guilt of setting traps.

I wish I had known about spurge while I was still in Government. The threat of a good dose of its acid milky juice might have done wonders in purging moles in the public service. Yours faithfully,
ROBERT ARMSTRONG,
House of Lords.
January 16.

Helicopter ambulance

From Mr Nicholas Serpell
Sir, Mr Richard Eariam, consultant surgeon at the London Hospital, Whitechapel, rightly extols (report, January 17) the virtues of a helicopter to get casualties to hospital. The Cornwall air ambulance, based at Truro, has been used for this purpose for some years and has been instrumental in saving many lives.

Many people in Cornwall are incensed that the Department of Health are apparently funding part of the London helicopter project and using it for a study of this method of transportation. The Cornwall air ambulance receives no State funding; its substantial running costs are met entirely from public donations. Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS SERPELL,
Springfield,
Lower Middle Hill,
Pensilva, Liskard, Cornwall.
January 17.

To memory dear

From Major A. J. B. Egremont-Lee
Sir, Following Mr MacGregor's letter (January 16) about his school bills at Lancing just over 50 years ago, my grandfather's final bill at Charterhouse in 1888 was £36 13s. 4d., made up of tuition, £10, and the balance for board. His annual bill was therefore about £110 — just over £50 less than Mr MacGregor's, giving an average annual increase of £1 over that period.

Judging from my son's final bill last year, the average increase over these last 50 years has risen to £100, which will doubtless look modest in 2038. Yours faithfully,
A. EGREMONT-LEE,
Hillsborough, 28 Berewecke Road,
Winchester, Hampshire.
January 17.

Clarity on 'going rate' for pay deals

From Mr G. H. B. Catell
Sir, Having followed developments in the Ford pay dispute, and having read the articles by Woodrow Wyatt (January 16) and John Bankham, Director General of the CBI (January 18), may I make a plea for more clarity and precision in the presentation of today's pay deals.

Ministers talk constantly of the importance of unit labour costs and improvements in productivity, without saying precisely what they mean. Mr Bankham deplores the Chancellor's attempts to curb pay increases in the private sector and points, rightly, to the opportunities for improving productivity in the public services, notably the ambulance service. Yet we see few figures on changes in unit labour costs in CBI member companies.

Few, it seems, make any attempt to show publicly the effect of new pay deals on the labour cost of a car or a measurement which can be made in the service industries, as well as in manufacturing.

It would be surprising if management as competent as that of the Ford Motor Company had not calculated precisely the effect on unit labour costs of their current pay offer. It would also be surprising if, in present market conditions, Ford was able to contemplate a rise in unit labour costs above the present level of inflation, 7.7 per cent. It is therefore a safe assumption that Ford's pay proposals are not, in themselves, inflationary.

So why can't Ford and other large employers show publicly and precisely what the effect of their proposals will have on unit labour costs? The way to avoid the pressures of claims for comparable pay increases, or the "going rate", is to show that every pay increase made public is compensated by increases in productivity. Comparability would then be related to performance. Yours faithfully,
G. H. B. CATTELL,
(Director, Manpower and Productivity, Department of Employment, 1968-70),
As from: Little Cheveney,
Yalding, Kent.
January 24.

Ambulance dispute

From Miss Grizelda George and others

Sir, The arrangements which have been made to carry seriously ill and injured patients to the accident and emergency department in which we work are dangerous and unsatisfactory. Vehicles are not equipped with suitable stretchers. Moreover, they do not carry splints (don't break your leg in north Oxfordshire), oxygen, suction apparatus, resuscitation equipment, emergency drugs, and the like. The police crews who drive them inevitably lack experience in first aid.

Many ambulance workers are family men who cannot readily support their wives and children on their current pay. We believe that their service and skills have been seriously undervalued by the Government. (Incidentally, much of the equipment carried on ambulance vehicles has been funded from public donations).

Scrapie and cows

From Mr Iain H. Pattison
Sir, Dr Helen C. Grant (January 23) gives me credit for having demonstrated in the 1960s, at the Agricultural Research Council's laboratories at Compton, very high resistance of the transmissible agent of scrapie to "irradiation".

That work was conceived and carried out by Dr Tikvah Alper, of the Hammermith Hospital, London, together with my colleagues,

Summer signs in the wintertime

From Mr Maurice Rickards
Sir, With all this talk of an unprecedented summery winter, readers might like to know of an item in the collection of the Foundation for Ephemera Studies. It is a loose fly leaf from a family bible. It bears the following handwritten inscription:

Memorandum Jan ye 31: 1759
Our Garden was Lick'd a wood for flowers & ye Bees all out ye Same as in ye midel of summer & ye Haggess all put out Green & ye Butter flies all round all this I Saw with my

Own eyes Witness my hand
Agnes Thompson
Setting the seal on the document are the pressed remains of the wings of a butterfly, perhaps a victim of that very day. As a final mark of probity there appears the added signature of John Thompson, presumably the man of the house.

It would seem we have had at least one unprecedented summery winter before this one. Yours sincerely,
MAURICE RICKARDS
(Curator),
The Foundation for Ephemera Studies,
12 Fitzroy Square, W1.
January 24.

From Mr William L. Melrose
Sir, My dictionary defines "balm" first as "fragrant, mild, soothing." So according to Robin Young, in his welcome to the early arrival of spring today (report, January 23), the Scottish weather was "milder" or perhaps "more soothing" than the seasonal average or, as he defines it, "balmier."

The crude economic equating of pay with performance cannot be applied where there is no clearly identifiable saleable product. Trying to force the arguments about their pay into this straitjacket merely fogs the issue.

Ultimately the pay of those in the service sector is arrived at by balancing the entrants against the leavers; that, for instance, is why mathematics teachers in the inner-city areas can look forward to more than handicraft teachers in the outer suburbs. It is called supply and demand and there is no such thing as a "going rate across the board". Yours faithfully,
JOHN AMBROSE,
66 London Street,
Chertsey, Surrey.

While we approve of preferential remuneration those with advanced skills in life-support, we are uneasy about the development of a two-tier system consisting exclusively of "cold" work on the one hand and emergency work on the other. Those who face the exigencies of dealing with major trauma benefit from a rota which enables them to do "cold" work from time to time in order to unwind. We are concerned that this should be kept in mind when a settlement is reached.

We believe that the six per cent pay formula is too simple and that a more sophisticated approach, which gives special treatment to those at the top and bottom ends of the pay scale, should be devised. A more rational settlement could then be made without loss of face. Yours faithfully,
GRIZELDA GEORGE,
C. S. PERROT,
A. L. TURNER,
PAT HUMPHRIES,
3 Field House Drive, Oxford.

D. A. Haig and M. C. Clarke, of the virology department at Compton.

Those exceptionally important "irradiation" studies made it virtually certain that the transmissible agent of scrapie did not contain nucleic acid and could not, therefore, be a conventional virus. Yours faithfully,
IAIN H. PATTISON,
42 Wendon Road,
Newbury, Berkshire.
January 23.

Society and the Government need to ensure that our exporters receive the social rewards and status commensurate with their importance as well as monetary rewards (as they do in the countries of our competitors) if we are to be successful. Otherwise fewer and fewer of our bright young people will move into industry, let alone export.

Yours sincerely,
R. G. JAMES,
PO Box 243, Abu Dhabi,
United Arab Emirates.
January 7.

collegiate approach is that it emphasizes the central importance of the teacher in the classroom.

The so-called incentive allowance approach is nothing more than an excuse for the Government to face up to its responsibilities appropriately to reward all effective teachers. Mr MacGregor's assertion that the overwhelming majority of teachers were indeed effective and "doing an excellent job".

A stronger training system more geared to the practical requirements of the classroom, supported by a rigorous pre-qualification screening process, would ensure that all teachers were efficient.

Yours faithfully,
NIGEL DE GRUCHY,
General Secretary-designate,
National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers,
22 Upper Brook Street, W1.
January 17.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (01)782 5946.

Summer signs in the wintertime

From Mr Maurice Rickards
Sir, With all this talk of an unprecedented summery winter, readers might like to know of an item in the collection of the Foundation for Ephemera Studies. It is a loose fly leaf from a family bible. It bears the following handwritten inscription:

Memorandum Jan ye 31: 1759
Our Garden was Lick'd a wood for flowers & ye Bees all out ye Same as in ye midel of summer & ye Haggess all put out Green & ye Butter flies all round all this I Saw with my

Own eyes Witness my hand
Agnes Thompson
Setting the seal on the document are the pressed remains of the wings of a butterfly, perhaps a victim of that very day. As a final mark of probity there appears the added signature of John Thompson, presumably the man of the house.

It would seem we have had at least one unprecedented summery winter before this one. Yours sincerely,
MAURICE RICKARDS
(Curator),
The Foundation for Ephemera Studies,
12 Fitzroy Square, W1.
January 24.

From Mr William L. Melrose
Sir, My dictionary defines "balm" first as "fragrant, mild, soothing." So according to Robin Young, in his welcome to the early arrival of spring today (report, January 23), the Scottish weather was "milder" or perhaps "more soothing" than the seasonal average or, as he defines it, "balmier."

In this corner of Scotland for most of last week the wind blew between strong and gale force. In a 24-hour period we had over an inch of rain, and it rained every day. We had occasional hail and even, in the distance, thunder and lightning. Farther north it was even worse.

Perhaps the second meaning of the word used by your correspondent would be a fitting epithet for those whose writing on Scotland's climate is based on looking at a list of figures of mean temperatures. Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM L. MELROSE,
53 Newton Street,
Greenock, Strathclyde.
January 22.

From Mrs H. M. Cotter
Sir, Today, at 2.15 p.m., as I worked over the ground with a long-handled "cultivator", I was astonished to see two healthy asparagus on one crown. They usually come with the first cuckoo. Yours etc.,
H. M. COTTER,
1 School Road, South Runcion,
King's Lynn, Norfolk.
January 22.

From Mr Patrick Dent
Sir, Today I discovered a blackbird's nest with three eggs; as a farmer I find the prospect of having spring before winter very alarming. Yours faithfully,
PATRICK DENT,
Clock Farm, Hunsingore,
Wentworth, North Yorkshire.
January 22.

MPs' interests

From Mr J. Enoch Powell
Sir, Mr Fishburn (article, January 20) describes what he supposes to have been my reasons for not complying with the resolution on registration of members' interests. My actual reason, set out in debate when the resolution was passed in 1973, was that it purported to impose a new condition on membership of the House. That requires legislation, and can not be done by resolution of either House.

I am, Sir, yours etc.,
J. ENOCH POWELL,
33 South Eaton Place, SW1.
January 20.

Sheep and goats

From Dr Malcolm Weller
Sir, Your fascinating abstract (January 18) of the paper in the *Journal of Field Archaeology* describes how blood found on an old slab was identified, by a new technique, as that of a sheep. As you say

apart from its intrinsic interest, this allows zoo-archaeologists a way of distinguishing sheep remains from those of goats, something difficult to do from the skeleton alone.

One welcomes the technical feat that enables us, at long last, to separate the two! Yours truly,
MALCOLM WELLER,
30 Arkwright Road, NW3.

Where credit's due

From Professor Patricia McLean
Sir, I read, with a mixture of wry amusement and not a little envy the letter from Mr Brian Garcia (January 19). This present letter, like all my letters, has been composed by..... P. McLean Typed (inexpertly on a word processor) by..... P. McLean Corrected by..... P. McLean Stamped, addressed and posted by..... P. McLean

Mr Garcia gives us no clue as to his occupation. I am willing to bet that it is not in any department of a university or medical school. I remain, Sir, yours dispiritedly,
P. McLEAN,
The University College and Mid-dex School of Medicine,
Department of Biochemistry,
Windeyer Building,
Cleveland Street, W1.
January 20.

BOOKS

Hippie hero of Beat Generation

Adrian Dannatt reviews the exotic life and times of a pioneering poet guru of our times

GLYN BOYD HART

Good literary biography has little to do with the literary talent of the subject or of the author. It depends upon the badness of the former's life, and the latter's empathy with it. Tennyson's disclaimer "What business has the public to know of Byron's wildness? He has given them fine work and they ought to be satisfied" is the exact opposite of the principle of any enjoyable biography: the wilder the life, the less the work comes up at all.

This fat labour of love by Miles exhaustively demonstrates the long-standing bad behaviour of an evidently good man, although one unbound by convention. If God is in the details, something holy must lurk within this book's 588 pages, which do indeed reinforce through the minutiae of his life the idea of Ginsberg as secular saint, Hippie redeemer of the bourgeois universe. Certainly Ginsberg's story is so astounding that the urge to retell it is irresistible, an easy way to shirk the true responsibilities of criticism.

Allen Ginsberg was born in 1926 to a Russian immigrant family of archetypal purity, a historic cocktail of equal parts Woody Allen neurotic and the Talmudic Marxist. His mother Naomi was born and brought up in the Russian village where Chagall once lived, in a strongly intellectual, firmly Communist family. His father, born in Newark, was a teacher, poet, and lifelong socialist. Schisms between Jewish socialism and Jewish Communism added to the tension of the marriage. Even greater strain was Naomi's clinical insanity. This childhood context of derangement and disharmony provides both explanation and measure of Ginsberg's later lifestyle. His mother's madness was one of his recurrent obsessions,



key motif of the biography and of *Kaddish*, his long *chef d'oeuvre*.

While at Columbia Allen threw himself into the very lowest of low life, and kick-started the Beat Generation to end all Bohemias, the Beat Generation. The only constants in this bizarre world were narcotics, polysexuality, crime, prison, and death. Reading lists of world classics were consumed along with the Benzadrine. The characters are consistently busy either killing themselves or each other. Every one of them seems exceptional in some way, usually unhealthy. The famous first line of Ginsberg's infamous "Howl", "I saw the best

minds of my generation destroyed by madness", seems demure euphemism compared to the facts. At the age of 22, Ginsberg had an ecstatic vision of Blake in East Harlem which he spent the next 15 years trying to recapture through every drug known to man and some known only to Amazon gods. If great writing depended on great experience Ginsberg would be a certifiable genius. He has lived enough to kill any mortal twice over.

This biography makes clear that Ginsberg's poetry, and our critical opinion of it, is secondary to the richness of the life pursued in its

GINSBERG
By Barry Miles
Viking, £20

name. The extent of his attempts at derangements make it remarkable he should have produced any work at all, regardless of quality. Ginsberg's only problem has been the boundless effusion of his generosity, consistently over-generous to friends, acquaintances, and enemies alike. He has been equally generous to every variety of religious or political cause, and unstoppably generous to his read-

ers, a creative largesse in search of some more rigorous editing process. When Jack Kerouac had turned into an alcoholic anti-Semitic slob and William Burroughs into an ice-cold automaton, Ginsberg still gave them all of his affection and attention, always unafraid of seeming soft or sentimental. Ginsberg's lack of fear, whether protesting about human rights to the Cuban government, having tea with Edith Sitwell, or entering the black hole of the cosmos through Yage hallucination, is only matched by his hunger for experience, spiritual, intellectual, sexual,

narcotic. Ginsberg and his generation transformed Western culture from the cerebral to the libidinal, from control to pleasure. This transformation was partly through their writings (that is the extent of their importance), but largely by personal example whose bravery we have all benefited from.

The present cultural climate may have moved back in reaction to something approximating the conformity of the Fifties, but we are not yet time-travellers: the freedoms won by Ginsberg and his fellow adventurers cannot be psychically reversed. However tempting to try to deny the idealism of

the Sixties, a tiny fraction of Ginsberg's curiosity might cure contemporary cynics. A Peyote Ritual or two could do wonders, for a whole breed of contemporary British writers, or with luck wipe them out altogether. Ginsberg's life has been one of endless experimentation and revelation, enough to shame one of the routines and petty limits of one's own life, daring one to be a time more courageous, suggesting it might not be an irreversible disaster to live a little more, a little further out.

The range of characters is so wide, from Auden to Warhol and every-which-way in between (though the Tom Driberg orgy is lacking here, as in Driberg's biography), the anecdotes are so unbelievable, the locations shifting as fluidly as the lives, that no reader could fail to be entertained. The milieu of Ginsberg's upbringing, among Upstate Marxist andist camps, is no less intriguing than the holy retreats of Tibet or communes of New Mexico. As film the script would be considered too fast for credibility.

Ginsberg wrote some genuinely innovative and sometimes democratically beautiful verse, but this is not, thank heavens, his collected poetry. Instead, it is a life so dramatic, so dangerous, so committed to hard-volume truth, that his survival is a miracle, his kindness, wisdom and modesty a mysterious blessing. Reading Richard Holmes's *Coleridge*, I find it hard to think of a modern equivalent to that man's genius at existence. But Ginsberg comes close in breadth and depth of travel, friendship, love, adventure, life. That Ginsberg's poetry and Miles's biography do not match Coleridge and Holmes should not deter any reader from the lure and moral of reading them.

Egghead Rule, OK?

Peter Jones

THE HELLENISTIC
STOA
Political Thought
and Action
By Andrew Erskine
Duckworth, £29.95

Zeno, the first Stoic (335-263 BC), was regarded as a dangerously radical thinker. As he strolled up and down the Painted Stoa in Athens, unfolding his thoughts to those gathered around him on such uncontentious issues as the abolition of money, of private property, and of marriage, he would have been greatly surprised (and probably rather annoyed) to be assured that in a few hundred years a form of Stoicism that stood for everything he detested would become the ruling philosophy of a Roman élite, which controlled the largest empire in the world.

Virtually all of our information about the early Stoics comes from people writing hundreds of years later. Erskine sees the turning point not in simple lack of philosophical interest in Zeno's principles, but in the Stoics' political involvement, especially in Cleomenes' Spartan revolution of 227 BC. Up till then, Stoics had behaved like your average ancient philosopher — humbly designing an ideal society. But Cleomenes, advised by the Stoic Sphaerus, actually put Stoic principles into effect, cancelling all debts and redistributing all land equally.

It does not need a philosopher to predict what the outcome was: catastrophic. The result was that the Stoics split, hard-liners still clinging to Zeno's pure first principles, the trimmers looking for modifications to them, and particularly attracted to the ever-expanding power of Rome. It was, of course, ever thus. Dangle a carrot before a philosopher, and even the most hardened nihilist will acknowledge that carrots do exist and can be extraordinarily tasty. By the time of the Roman Empire, Stoics were arguing that slavery — which Zeno ferociously attacked — was, indeed, quite a healthy thing, first because men became slaves by *fatum* anyway (good Stoic doctrine, that), but second because the best should rule over the worst (so empire was justified too).

I suspect that this highly speculative book will stir fruitful controversy among philosophers and historians alike.

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Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the sons, by two marriages, of a man known only as Father. Matthew is half-mad; Mark and Luke are strange doting twins, the one characterless, the other mentally retarded; John is simply sad. There is a family for whom happiness has always been a struggle, who now live on the lifeless Lancashire moors, haunted by the ghosts of Father's wives: angelic Mary, who died giving birth to John, and selfless Anne, who was murdered.

In *A Lonely Place* opens with Father setting down in confessional form the story of his life, from birth at the beginning of the century to his wife's unsolved murder and a son's suicide. Then, with notes and letters, John, Matthew, and Mark take the story up to 1987, adding their testaments, like apostles writing about the Father after his death. They all claim guilt for the deaths — only the truth according to John does not tally with that of Matthew, or of Mark, or Luke. So who is right?

Religious — and anti-religious — threads are easily plucked from the narrative, but never as a tightly woven scheme. The sons, for instance, are men tormented by doubt, and the question of whether Father loves them; the suffering inflicted on them by

their omnipotent father is like C.S. Lewis's God shouting through a "megaphone of pain". Matthew's suicide is at once Christ-like, in that a son gives up his life for love of his father, and the opposite, the result of anarchic visions in which life is a prison best escaped. There are no straight answers to the questioning.

But the characters are not always head-held-in-hands, thinking about the eternals. There is a reassuring measure of thought about beer and dominoes at the White Lion, football, unions and strikes, rations and conscription. Though its impetus comes from a transition from family saga to novel offers a solid social portrait of the North, incorporating the Depression, the wars, the post-war boom, and Thatcherism.

James Poyser wrote this, his first novel, at the age of 20. And it is not remarkable for that alone. With every sentence his writing clamps one to his distinctive world. But just occasionally, like the cold "otherworlds" of, say, *Wuthering Heights* or Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*, where

correspondence, especially, he explains his two reasons for using the Scots tongue: (i) the vogue in England for Scots-tipped pastoral verse; (ii) his endeavour (inspired by the Scots-English of the songs and ballads) not only to find the word most suitable to "the idea of the stanza" but also "the most agreeable modulation of syllables". Burns knew what he was doing in discounting advice to give up writing in Scots (such as it was) and in affecting a "scarcity of English".

Through such affectation he would often get his way with editors. What comes across in the letters is a subtle and manipulative artist: humble in appealing to lords for career advancement; otherwise, fierce in inveighing against class inequality; ingratiating in winning over the intelligentsia; ruthless in psychanalysing them. Even his sentimental letters to Agnes McLehose are illuminating when seen in relation to his literary masks:

... never woman more intirely possessed my soul. — I know myself and how far I can depend on passions. Well — It has been my peculiar study. —

Indeed it had been. His advice to his brother, William, was to "try for intimacy as soon as you feel the first symptoms of the passion". Yet there is his serious side in the many reflections on the rational basis of religion. As R.L. Stevenson says of Burns: "There was never a man of letters with more absolute command of his means." Judging from the letters of the man, he is not far wrong.

F.W. Freeman



THE COMPLETE
LETTERS OF
ROBERT BURNS
Edited by James A. Mackay
Burns Federation, Alloway
Publishing, Ayr, £15.95

Man for a' that

Why has it taken 200 years to get an accurate, comprehensive, and reasonably priced edition of the letters which for style and subtlety bear comparison with the Boswell journals? Burns, who mentions in 1794 collecting "any letters I have written", obviously meant them to be published. Nowhere does he give us a more entertaining account of himself, or one which so thoroughly removes the shroud of myth surrounding him.

From the correspondence he emerges an Enlightenment figure, intellectually and socially well-placed to perpetrate one of the great hoaxes of literary history. In it we discover a modern scientific farmer pretending to be a ploughman; a heaven-taught ploughman; in the words of Henry MacKenzie, writing directly and effortlessly from nature. Burns would play this for all it was worth, while privately disclaiming "intuitive propriety and unlaboured elegance". He was far more artistically self-confident than generally thought to be. The letters to his song editors that begin, "You know that my pretensions to musical taste, are merely a few of Nature's instincts, untaught & untutored by Art", characteristically end with his rejecting Pleyel's alterations and complaining bitterly over "the strait-jacket of Criticism".

Burns considered his song-writing high art, and planned to publish his own collection, "to do justice to my Muse": always his chief concern. He was foremost a poet and not, as he would have us believe, a Scots vernacular versifier. All but one of his 724 letters are in English. In the Thomson

In step with the odd God squad

Eric James

TRADITION AND
TRUTH
The Challenge of
England's Radical
Theologians, 1962-1989
By David L. Edwards
Hodder & Stoughton, £14.95

I must have seemed so obvious. David Edwards has been either publishing, or reviewing the work of English radical theologians, and interpreting them to the ecclesiastical public, for a quarter of a century. What was clearly required now was to go over the whole ground again, polishing up a few of the reviews, and then giving each of the surviving theologians an opportunity to respond. What could be more generous, more sympathetic and understanding? What could better guarantee dialogue for the truth's sake?

Alas, it hasn't turned out like that; for none of those faced with Edwards's examination of their work is happy with the result. Dr John Bowden says: "I don't think you even begin to see the strength of my case." And clearly they were not so much invited to join the dialogue as confronted with a kind of judgment from Olympus, with the result that there is little meeting of minds and genuine dialogue. Yet it was, for the most part, an excellent project in conception; for it is important that the ideas of England's radical theologians should be understood, examined, and, if necessary, challenged.

Two of the theologians Edwards chose to examine — Bishop John Robinson and Professor Geoffrey Lampe — are now dead, and for this most obvious of all reasons, were precluded from the possibility of dialogue. Don Cupitt has already had Scott Cowdell's short but sympathetic study, *Atheist Priest? Don Cupitt and Christianity*, written about him. The questions Maurice Wiles, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford since 1970, has been asking, undoubtedly still need to be faced. Wiles thinks "the language of 'intervention' altogether inappropriate" to describe the activity of God in relation to this world. John Bowden's brave book, *Jense: The Unanswered Questions*, is re-

Cold comfort gospel

FICTION

Sarah Edworthy

IN A LONELY PLACE
By James Poyser
Hamish Hamilton, £12.99
THE OTHER SIDE
By Mary Gordon
Bloomsbury, £13.99
AN ACT OF
TREACHERY
By Henri Troyat
Translated by Anthea Bell
Aldan Ellis, £12.99

passions are equally racked, one feels the need of a narrator for the perspective of a commonsensical outsider. It takes more than material props of coal-tar soap, flat caps, and the baker's daughter to anchor all this tortured introspection in the Rochdale terraces.

The Other Side sounds potentially theological too, and in a way it is — except that Paradise would be the Atlantic Ocean, with this side of it and the other, Ireland

and the United States. It deals with four generations of an Irish-American family, as they reunite at the house of the dying Ellen and Vincent MacNamara. And what a family. There's Magdalene, a beauty salon manageress who went to bed with hypochondria 20 years ago and never got up again. There's the evangelical Theresa, plus husband, imbecile son with rotting teeth, and daughter who was a nun until she was caught in bed with a priest. There's good old Dan and long-dead John, and names like Darci, Staci, Diarmid, Cam, Ramon, and Jeremiah. Every possible combination of cousin and aunt have dark familial thoughts about each other. It goes on and on and on.

Underneath all this unstructured, humourless honouring of everybody's every emotion is the original tale of spirit and adventure: how Ellen — the grand matriarch of the MacNamara clan — grew up unhappily in a provincial Irish town, and stole her father's money to run away to America and make her way through lies and deceit. If only that was not related through the

haze of senile recollection. Mary Gordon is so good on ambivalence towards the Home Country, as both green and honest Erin and the land of drunks and corrupt priests, so sharp in her portrayal of a nonagenarian marriage, and spunky in comment, that the muddled whole disappoints.

The title may have lost something in translation, but a lack of sharpness dulls the length of Henri Troyat's *An Act of Treachery*. Seventeen-year-old Vincent, looking back to the events of his youth in Paris at the end of the war, recalls how he angrily associated his mother's death with his father's remarriage and the fall of France. Devoted to his sister Valérie, who lets him stay in her flat, he can hardly bear it when she seems to desert him by falling in love with Hervé, a glamorous Resistance worker. Little does he know that his one chance to spite Hervé will also lose him Valérie forever. The grown-up Vincent is too resigned about writing his heart out, but Troyat's visual sense is strong on the effects of war on restaurants, schools, flats, and the commercial smiles of collaborating Parisians. If indulged with a bit of mental lingering here and soft-focusing there, this has all the makings of a poignant "little brothers don't count" tale.

NEW HARBACKS

The Literary Editor's selection of interesting books:
Ammon, by Davidson Black (Hutchinson, £16.95) Quest.
An Encyclopedia of the History of Technology, edited by Ian McNeil (Routledge, £85).
The English Heritage Book of Church Architecture, by Warwick Rothwell (Batsford, £19.95).
Everyman's Modern Plagues & Fables, by Giles Brandreth (Dent, £17.95, paperback, £7.95).
Latest sex and some older:
Georgia O'Keeffe, by Roxana Robinson (Bloomsbury, £25).
American modernist painter and proto-feminist.
Loyalties, A son's memoir, by Carl Bernstein (Macmillan, £14.95).
A Moment's Liberty, the shorter diary, by Virginia Woolf, abridged and edited by Anne Olivier Bell (The Hogarth Press, £20).
Great Gatsby portrait.
Nixon, The triumph of a politician, 1962-72, by Stephen Ambrose (Simon & Schuster, £19.95) Vol 2 of 3.
Prehistoric Scotland, by Ann MacSweeney & Mick Sharp (Batsford, £14.95) Fine photos and archaeologist's text.
Turgenev, by Henri Troyat, translated by Nancy Amphoux (Allison & Busby, £14.95).
W. B. Yeats, The Poems, edited by Daniel Albright (Dent, £25).

THE COMPLETE FACTS ON SCHOOL BOARDS



The Times Scottish Education Supplement's school boards guide has now been reprinted as a 32-page information pack. The *School Boards* guide (first published TSES 13/10/89-1/12/89) is presented in an attractive and durable plastic wallet. It is available for only £2.50. To order your copy simply complete the coupon below. For orders of over 25 special rates apply, please contact Joan Snadden on (031) 220 1155.

THE TIMES Scottish Education

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HEALTH

When the patient is struck off

What happens if your doctor exercises his right to choose? Jane Bidder reports

Does your doctor think you are a pain in the neck? And could he send you packing if under the new GP pay structure, he finds you "un-economic" because you take up too much time? Such fears were raised this week in Parliament by Labour MPs including Harriet Harman, the shadow minister for Health. But, despite promises by the Health Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, to investigate, the fact remains that your GP can ask you to move on without so much as an explanation.

Last month Sandra Daly, a 25-year-old first-time mother, received a brief note from her GP. It ended: "You clearly have no faith in us and I think it is better for all of us if you change your doctor."

Daly, an insurance broker, and her husband Christopher, aged 27, were dumbfounded. "It was the culmination of a long problem which had started with our nine-month-old son Scott, who developed a dreadful cold," she says. "I took him once a week for two months to our doctor and it was only on the last visit that he was found to have an infection."

"A month later, he became very ill again, with vomiting and a raging temperature. I rang the doctor and panicked, saying I wanted a doctor within an hour. I felt the receptionist was rude to me - although I accept that I might have been abrupt myself - and I put the phone down. The doctor rang two hours later and asked why I'd upset his receptionist. My husband told him we were taking Scott to casualty. He was admitted to hospital for four days with bronchitis. Just after we'd taken him in, the doctor called at our house to see Scott and left the next day."

"I don't know of another surgery that I don't walk to - I don't drive - and I can't believe what has happened. I feel very angry and rejected. The Family Practitioner Committee has just sent me a list of other doctors in the area, but apparently I have to be interviewed before they will accept me."

It often comes as a nasty shock to patients that a doctor has a legal right to remove them from their books without giving a reason, just as a patient can change practices without explanation. A doctor cannot, however, strike off a patient who requires treatment within the next seven days.

The problem increases if patients find their reputations precede them to the new doctor. In April, amendments to the National Health Service (General Medical and Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 1974 will come into force. Each practice will have to distribute leaflets listing its services; the name, sex, and date of qualification of doctors; surgery times; arrangements for home visits; and information about staff. The practice will also have to publish an annual report giving details of the number of hospital referrals made, the use of hospital diagnostic services, and so on.

The idea is to help both new and existing patients know more about a practice and so have a better chance of making a suitable match with a like-minded GP. The amendment will not, however, prevent doctors from showing patients the door without explanation. This concerns Toby Harris, director of the Association of Community Health Councils, a Government-inspired body which acts as a layman's medical watchdog.

"Under the new pay structure for GPs, it could be advantageous to get rid of high-cost patients who are constantly taking up their time or proving troublesome," he says. "It's very worrying that GPs don't have to say why they want patients to move on - there should be some reason, for the patient's peace of mind."

To help avoid such problems, each Community Health Council (CHC) can advise upset patients or point them towards suitable practices (even though it cannot make personal recommendations). But the system falls down if a doctor will not take on a patient if, for example, his books are full. So

the area's Family Practitioner Committee (FPC) of local medical and lay people, which administers the contracts of family practitioners, might then allocate a doctor to a patient. The GP can then appeal and, if the appeal is upheld, the FPC has to find another doctor. This arrangement can be unsatisfactory for both sides: a patient might resent being shunted into a practice which he might not like, while a doctor might not appreciate having another patient thrust upon him.

The number of allocations in some areas appears to be increasing. Islington CHC points out that its neighbouring FPC allocated only eight patients between 1986-1987, rising to 28 in 1987-88 and 83 in 1988-89. There are no national statistics available to confirm the trend.

Some unhappy patients point out that they cannot tell if doctors refuse to take them on because they have a "bad" reputation or because their lists really are full. It can also be tricky to transfer doctors within a practice, as Gwen, a 68-year-old former health visitor, discovered

after she had "politely" criticized her GP for treatment to wear her off tranquillisers.

"I discovered her methods were out of date when I went to a self-help group and was referred to a well-known consultant, who was amazed at the treatment I'd received," she says. "When I went back to tell her how annoyed I was, my GP agreed to arrange for me to be seen by another doctor in the practice. She, however, voiced doubts about accepting me in view of my criticism of the first doctor, so my husband then asked his GP within the practice if he'd see me instead. Two weeks later we received a note through the door asking us to go elsewhere."

"My husband went to see three of the doctors to discuss the matter, but they hardly said a word. I felt very rejected and it also affected my recovery from tranquillisers. I certainly believe there should have been some kind of adjudication between the doctor and myself, especially as our relationship up to that date had been very good."

Gwen and her husband then approached three other practices,

whose lists were full, but eventually, through writing a personal letter to a former medical contact, they were taken on by a husband and wife team. "I was very worried they'd assume I was a difficult patient, but when I gave a brief explanation of my history, the woman GP made no comment. We were grateful to find a practice, although it is 10 minutes' drive away, which isn't that convenient at our age. Two years on, we've been told our doctors - whom we get on very well with - can only take people from their immediate catchment area, so we're having to see them privately to get round the boundary predicament."

Meanwhile, it is not easy for the doctor when faced with genuinely awkward customers. "Patients can be violent or abusive, not only to the doctor but also to his staff, whom he has a duty to protect," says Linda Cuthbertson of the British Medical Association. "It's not a good idea for a doctor to carry on if a relationship has broken down. It's rather like going to a lawyer: you have to get on with him."

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Laying down the law gently



MICHAEL GRADE

If I were Prime Minister the first law I would pass would be to abolish first courses, which seem totally unnecessary - partly because you eat too much, and also because it takes up too much time. But I do like my grog!

My problem is that I have a voracious appetite, particularly when the adrenalin is flowing - I suppose I'm a nervous eater - and when you're on a roll of early mornings and late nights you never stop eating. Then I get alarmed and think, "This is not very good for me," but I don't do a great deal about it other than slow the eating down a bit for a short period.

I love red meat, but I would never order it. I think fish or poultry is more digestible. I very rarely eat puddings, much as I love treacle pudding. They're very occasional treats, and if I have anything it's usually fruit.

If I get concerned about the fat I adopt a very gentle approach. I never eat breakfast unless I'm out. I just pick an apple out of the fridge and eat it on the way to the office. That keeps me going until lunchtime. I've given up coffee, but I drink decaffeinated because one reads all kinds of things about caffeine and it just seems to be unnecessary. I like malt whisky, particularly in cold weather. With alcohol the great thing is just to go for a few days every now and again and not have a drink at all. A doctor explained that the liver regenerates itself very quickly and if you go two days without having alcohol it completely recovers, so I try to do that every now and again.

I've been doing these exercises I haven't been back for a while.

Temperamentally I enjoy physical exertion, but it has to be golf, sailing, skiing - something with a purpose to it. I ski, and I went sailing last February, which was quite exhausting. Golf is good for a walk, and I usually carry my own golf-bag these days.

The only way I sustain my energy is because I enjoy what I'm doing. I find it very exhilarating. I leave home about 8.30 if I don't have a breakfast meeting, and rarely get back before 11 o'clock at night. There's always something to do - speaking, going to a dinner, or the theatre - that's work-related. The great relaxation is a good kip in the afternoon at the weekend. I can sleep anywhere; you've got to catch up somehow. I don't sleep wonderfully well at night - I suppose, as you get older, you don't need that much sleep - but I always get back to sleep again.

I don't do much foreign travel these days. It's mostly around Britain - trains and cars and things. I sleep like a baby and an island. I enjoy long flights, because of the lovely peace and quiet - nobody can get to me. If anybody starts talking to me, I tell them I'm an insurance agent, and that shuts them up. I'm dreading the day when more aircraft have telephones.

Mental health is the key, and that means having a balance in your life, getting a respite. Television does take over your life. As I get older I work a bit harder at creating a balance and getting away from work as much as possible.

The key is to enjoy it. If you're in a job and you don't enjoy it, it's murder, an endless marathon of exhaustion. I'm very lucky to be in this business - there are so many aspects to it, it's terrific.

Interview by Pamela Nowicks

Feet first into the world

Few babies have had such an adventurous first fortnight of life as Charles Hocking, and it is still six weeks before he was due to have been born. He was the baby who, because he was in the premature baby unit at St Thomas's Hospital, London, was spared by the woman who later kidnapped Alexandra Griffiths.

Charles's delivery was dramatic. His antics in *utero* had kept Patricia Hocking, his mother, awake throughout the night before his arrival. It was more than just kicking, she said, it was more as if he was dancing on a trampoline. She was so alarmed that she felt it wise to see Anthony Kenny, her obstetrician, who arranged for her to attend a clinic at another hospital along with some routine gynaecological patients.

When Kenny examined her he was as amazed as she to find she was already in labour. And not only was Charles about

MEDICAL BRIEFING

Dr Thomas Stuttford

to enter the world, but he was going to do it feet rather than head first; one foot could already be felt through the membranes, although the rest of the baby was firmly ensconced within the partially open womb.

If the membranes had ruptured, the cord carrying the life-preserving oxygen might have prolapsed and become obstructed, with possibly fatal consequences for the baby, so his delivery became a matter of extreme urgency. Kenny put Hocking into his car and drove to St Thomas's as fast as possible. Charles was delivered by immediate

Caesarean section. He is now beginning to feed well - the suck reflex is often one of the last to become well-established - and weighs 4lb 12oz.

One baby in four lies in the uterus feet downwards - the breech position - at some stage of early pregnancy, but by the 32nd week 60 per cent of them have done a somersault, and at term fewer than 5 per cent are still in the breech position, either leading with their feet - a footling presentation - or their bottom.

Even in the best units, breech deliveries carry a much heavier mortality risk than normal deliveries, so that although managing a breech was to be considered a fine exposition of the obstetrician's art, it is now never done when other factors could compromise the baby's chances, such as in the Hocking case, which was complicated by the prematurity of the baby and, by midwifery standards, the advanced age of the mother - 34.

Sexual stirrings

Even in a romantic novel, women who have battled bravely to retain their virginity sometimes succumb to human frailty and surrender to the charms of their suitor. Does this romantic image reflect real life? Doctors are, in this Aids-threatened world, taking an increasing interest in why young people decide to start having sexual intercourse. Is it that, like a Barbara Cartland heroine, they are overwhelmed by desire, or is some other, deep-seated emotion involved?

A survey carried out for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America shows that an irresistible passion for the tall, dark stranger is not the usual motivation; more important is the desire to keep up with the Miss Joneses. Peer pressure from other girls was the most common reason given for a young girl starting her

active sex life - 34 per cent of American women lost their virginity for this reason, another 14 per cent for a very similar one - because "everybody does it" - and 17 per cent succumbed to pressure from their boyfriends.

For most women, intense love or even savage lust did not enter into consideration, whereas 10 per cent of young men said that they were motivated by "sexual gratification" - but only 2 per cent admitted that they applied pressure on their girlfriends. Twenty-six per cent of boys capitulated to peer pressure, and another 16 per cent were motivated by curiosity.

Better blockers

The first widespread snow of the winter this week will remind patients on betablockers of one of the drugs' most frequent side-effects, cold extremities. But, as they wrap up in layers of

sweaters, they can take heart: *Pulse* magazine reports that a long-awaited new generation of betablockers, without this side-effect (peripheral vascular disease), should be licensed for use in Britain this year.

Betablockers are among the most commonly prescribed groups of drugs; their advent made it possible to treat blood pressure without inflicting severely incapacitating side-effects on patients, but even the latest selective betablockers are not entirely free of them. They may not cause such heavy sedation by day, or nightmares at night, but many patients complain that their intellect is not quite so sharp as before, and that dreams are still vivid and sleep light. Cold extremities are a constant problem, causing such diverse symptoms as cold, blue hands and feet, impotence and accelerated balding. More serious are the effects on asthma, which is made worse, and mild heart strain, which can be increased.

The new generation of

betablockers is available on the Continent and in Ireland, but is still undergoing trials in the United Kingdom. Provided that they meet the approval of the Committee on Safety of Medicines, the drugs are due to be launched later in the year.

The first two - Unicar (dilevalol) made by Schering-Plough, and Selectol (celiprolol) by Rorer Health Services - have similar properties. It is claimed that they do not cause restlessness or increasing asthma, or lead to peripheral vascular disease. Other betablockers have an adverse effect on the serum fats, cholesterol in particular, but the new ones are reported to be free of this disadvantage.

Time will show whether this property will enable betablockers to reduce the number of cases of coronary thrombosis in hypertensive patients as effectively as it has out the death rate from strokes. Patients with poor kidney function may not be able to tolerate the new betablockers.

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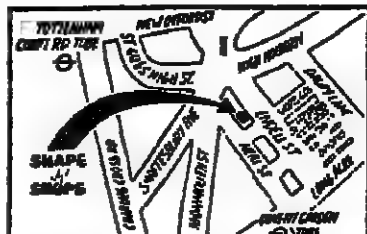
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Porridge, as many a television viewer will recall, is also slang for imprisonment. This comes not from the food's role as a staple of prison diet (although British prisoners' allowances still include enough for three or four bowls a week), but from its association with "stir", a word which came to mean prison because it sounded like the Roman word for jail.

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SHAPE UP SHOP

SOME REVIEWS MAY BE REPRINTED FROM YESTERDAY'S LATER EDITIONS

THE ARTS

Victims of Soviet censors

TELEVISION
Sheridan Morley

Just as researchers from all over the world have been using America's Freedom of Information Act these last few years to uncover the deepest and darkest secrets of the FBI and the CIA, so the documentary-maker Roger Graef has become the first to realize that glasnost and perestroika can be used to unlock the archives of the KGB.

In by far the most intriguing and terrifying of the "Soviet Spring" programmes thus far, last night's *Signals* on Channel 4 entered the vaults of the KGB to examine precise details of the destruction of art and artists in the Soviet Union these last 70 years. Graef has turned glasnost back on itself, to work with the Commission for the Literary Legacy of Banned Soviet Writers. In a masterly weave of dramatized extracts from forbidden scripts (superbly performed by Tom Courtenay, Brian Cox, Bill Paterson and Julie Corringham) and interviews with the people who for decades suppressed them, Graef created a chilling tapestry of censorship and state murder.

The censor himself, interviewed about the banning of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, noted simply that it was too powerful to be published: "It might have brought down the roof." A man who personally killed many Soviet artists said that he would cheerfully do it again, if that was what the State required.

But to be a poet in Russia has always meant also being a hero, and the total control exercised by the KGB had certain ironies. When Bulgakov got his diaries back from them shortly before his death, he burned them in a rage, unaware that the KGB had filed a copy, which is now available for students of his work.

The entire history of modern literature in the Soviet Union this century has passed through prisons and death camps, and Graef's film was all the more effective for its ice-cold determination simply to uncover the details of destruction that resulted from Stalin's terror of any original thought.

"You find the person, we will find a reason for his death," was the official arts policy of the time, and the awful underlying message was that everyone in this programme clearly believed that it could all so easily happen again. In his last interview, three days before he died, Andrei Sakharov told *Signals*: "There is glasnost but still no freedom of speech."

And Graef's thoughtful investigation deserves all the BAFTA awards it will doubtless get, for chronicling a story of literary terror which might too easily be overlooked in the name of the new Soviet friendship. Graef has disproved the convenient and much-loved thesis that art can transcend politics. In the Soviet Union of this century it did nothing of the sort, and the graves and the files are the evidence of it.

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Hilary Finch meets husband-and-wife opera singers Philip Langridge and Ann Murray, playing lovers in a new ENO production

Together in perfect disharmony

ALAN WELLER

Reunited on stage: Philip Langridge is Benedict and Ann Murray Beatrice in Berlioz's *Beatrice and Benedict*

Berlioz's final opera, *Beatrice and Benedict*, ends with the lines: "Today a truce is signed: we'll become enemies again tomorrow." The two lovers, after much ado, agree to marry only after a spirited quarrel. Then life begins in earnest.

When Ann Murray and Philip Langridge took the title roles in Ronald Eyre's 1980 production for the Buxton Festival, Murray threw a cup of Bovril at Langridge in a heated argument just before the first night. A year later, they were married. They had originally met in 1975 at a rehearsal for Beethoven's Ninth in a Soho studio (Murray: "it was a house of easy virtue, actually...") and they sang together for the first time in Cavalli's *Eritrea* later that year in Wexford.

Berlioz at Buxton was something of a turning point in both their private and public lives. Did this make it particularly difficult to return to the work, 10 years on? Murray claims they have both come to Tim Albery's new production for English National Opera "having blocked out the earlier memories. Everything is so different now. Then we were quite footloose and fancy-free; now, with a three-year-old son, work has to be more calculated and organized. And we've both been through the mill in our careers since then..."

Langridge, who has gone through the torments of an Aron, an Idomeneo, a Laca, a Vere, an Aschenbach and a Grimes, finds Berlioz's portrayal of innocence the greatest challenge. "We may be

more experienced, but that only makes innocence all the harder to play. It's easy to play wise when you're still young, but the other way round..."

Ronald Eyre's Buxton production was the first really to give the work dramatic credibility in Britain, though Colin Davis has championed its music on record in the 1960s, and Mark Elder (who conducts for the Coliseum) had found himself playing bassoon in the pit at a Cambridge University Opera Society production reviewed here by the late William Mann in 1967. Eyre's production gave the impetus for another *Beatrice and Benedict*, three years later, at Opera North. This time, David Alden took a few very large side-steps by setting Berlioz's elusive, bitter-sweet "caprice written with the point of a needle" amongst the gore and black comedy of the Crimea.

The opera has certainly not been without difficulties in making a dramatic case for itself. It is moulded as much from Berlioz's romantic response to Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* as Verdi's *Macbeth*, *Otello* and *Falstaff* are from his; but too much of the serious side of the story, perhaps, had been cut for English taste.

Nobody seemed quite at ease with its proportions or tone of voice. Above all, the long French dialogues sat uneasily with Shakespeare's pungent turns of phrase.

Marty Cruikshank has been working with ENO's cast on a new Englishing of Berlioz's French

French, but each time you do the dialogue it becomes entirely different. And there are a few lines that everybody knows which you really have to do as Shakespeare, like "My dear Lady Disdain, are you yet living?" or "The world must be peopled."

Berlioz said the work was more difficult to bring off than *The Trojans* because of its humour. Langridge again: "Comedy is al-

ways hard. You have to play it almost like tragedy; absolutely straight. And the musical numbers are very serious. Even the men's bantering trio about marriage is witty in the most subtle of verbal and musical ways."

While Berlioz gives Benedict more of a hard time vocally ("his writing comes in a direct line from Rameau; the French can be pretty cruel to tenors!") Beatrice has the

responsibility for the lyrical plums.

Murray is gearing herself up for the aria of the evening in which she will have to recreate "a feeling of ecstasy, but with both great dramatic strength and the vocal ease of a child who realizes for the first time that she's becoming a woman."

Langridge is customarily the one who brings the work home, worrying away at its problems and chatting incessantly about detail. Murray claims she prefers to keep quiet and get on with the job. Do this Beatrice and this Benedict spend much time dissecting each other's roles? "He hasn't spoken at all during this one!" "She's right. We discuss it in rehearsal, of course, but these days there's too much much else to talk about when we get home."

Like their respective schedules for the next year, which seem to coincide only in November, when they appear in *La Clemenza di Tito* together in Zurich, Murray played Sesto when the production was new last October, but this will be Langridge's first stage Tito.

Murray says: "He'll find himself in a lacquered black box of a set, in modern classical dress, and greatly troubled by the affairs of state in his briefcase..."

● *Beatrice and Benedict* has its first performance tonight at the Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, London. WCC and continues in repertoire with English National Opera. There are further performances on Saturday, on January 31 and during February, with the final performance this season on March 1.

Unconvinced by low-life types

LAURENCE

THEATRE

Benedict Nightingale

Savage in Limbo
Duke of Cambridge

If the name John Patrick Shanley means anything to you, it is probably because of the script he wrote for the movie *Moonstruck*. You are less likely to have caught his *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea*, a stage play that came from Off-Broadway briefly to rumple the London fringe in 1985.

As I recall, it was an urban fairy-tale about the regenerative effect of love on a human creature who spent much of the evening in a frenzy of hatred and murderous rage. If Mills and Boon had commissioned a work from one of the more ferocious Jacobean, the result might have looked like Shanley's play.

His *Savage in Limbo* is an awkward mix too, though not so extreme a one. All the characters clustered in his Bronx bar are dreadfully lonely and some seem bitter and even rancorous. But by the end dissatisfied, fidgety Tony has agreed to shack up with good-hearted Linda, who has clandestinely borne him a child. Grumpy Murk has proposed marriage to crazy April, who has never got over not becoming a nun. Only Denise Savage, the ageing virgin who gives the play its somewhat portentous title, is left intoning "This is not life." "Ain't cha tired of living if you think this is all living is?" and so on.

Try as I might, I could not

Watery one for the road? Barman and customer in *Savage in Limbo*

believe a word of it, and am still not altogether sure how to distribute the blame. The group at the Duke of Cambridge pub-theatre in Kentish Town quaintly call themselves the Uneasy In My Easy Chair Theatre Company, and are at times even more uneasy than they would presumably wish.

They are at ease neither with the low-life setting nor with Shanley's earnest ruminations about human

isolation, nor with his sporadic attempts to be funny.

One moment, all is semi-demi-articulate Bronxese. The next, someone is comparing their collective predicament to "dead leaves floating in the water". There is a persistent feeling that of a rather literary playwright and a clean-cut cast are slumming.

Indeed, one quirk of Bryce Pedersen's production seemed to sum up much of the evening. These loners and aggressive losers order wine, brandy alexanders, and other drinks; and the booze that materializes next to the barman's symbolically withered plants is, in every case, quite unmistakably water.

At least the amateurs caught the baroque spirit

Stephen Pettiitt

B minor Mass
Barbican Hall

Argument still rages over whether one should play baroque music on period-style instruments or on modern ones. As long as a performance represents a fair attempt to get to the heart of the music, it should not matter. This reading of Bach's B minor Mass was of no help, however, to those who favour 19th century rather than 18th-century tradition.

The problem was not that the English Chamber Orchestra was playing modern-style instruments, nor even that the conductor, Jeffrey Tate, made no attempt to encourage 18th-century articulation. It was simply that the performance seemed to have been assembled so carelessly. Misjudgements of speed, balance and ensemble abounded, while the soloists were either miscast or mishandled.

In fact, the most satisfying contributions of the evening came from the only amateur musicians on the platform, the singers of the Tallis Chamber Choir. Their bright, young voices did not always negotiate these testing lines perfectly, but they nevertheless seemed ignited by the spirit of the music and, often in league with the ECO's three splendid, strong trumpeters, gave us some thrilling moments to recall. One's mood was lifted considerably once the Credo had got under way; this

section, of course, consists for the most part of choral movements.

However, even they began shakily, with an opening "Kyrie eleison" which became faster as each bar passed. The same problem bedevilled the "Christe eleison", sung by the ill-matched pair of Margaret Marshall and Kathleen Kuhlmann, who, with the other solo singers, were bafflingly placed behind the orchestra.

Here, moreover, there were disagreements about intonation, exacerbated rather than disguised by each singer's wide vibrato, while the absence of light and shade in their phrasing made one suspect that Bach was being disallowed his say.

So it also seemed in the first solo aria, "Laudamus te", but here the fault was more that of the obligato violinist, Maciej Rakowski,

who set off at a tremendous pace, turning what should be a deliciously elaborate line into an assault course to be negotiated as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Fortunately there were more sensitive instrumentalists about. Neil Black's oboe d'amore solo in "Qui tollis" and William Bennett's flute line in the slow-paced "Benedictus" were beautifully controlled.

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THE ARTS/FILM

Vietnam morality *Casualties of War*, thriller *Black Rain* Yaaba from Africa, *Piravi* from India and Fellini's *8½*

War's obscenity writ large

CINEMA

David Robinson

Since Oliver Stone's *Platoon*, Hollywood has continued to titillate the American conscience with films about Vietnam guilt. *Casualties of War* (18, Warner West End, Cannon Chelsea, Whiteleys) is certainly the toughest of the bunch — even if it has in some respects softened the true story on which it is based.

In 1966 four G.I.s serving in Vietnam kidnapped a village girl and carried her off with them on a reconnaissance patrol — as the sergeant says in the picture, "for a little portable R 'n' R to break up the boredom and keep up morale". After raping her the men brutally killed her by stabbing and shooting.

A fifth member of the patrol refused to be involved, and despite subsequent attempts on his life by his guilty buddies, forced a court-martial which condemned them to long prison sentences. The story was published in 1969 in a *New Yorker* article by Daniel Lang, which later appeared in book form.

The incident, scripted from Lang's account by David Rabe, has been filmed by Brian DePalma, who has over the years moved from the occult terrors of *Carrie* and *The Fury* to the more realistic horrors of *Scarface* and *The Untouchables*. In *Casualties of War* he handles his neo-documentary theme with the same awesome skill in terror. Images, sound, special effects (blood, fire, shot and explosion), powerful

Time to take a moral stand: Michael J. Fox (left) refuses to join Sean Penn in assaulting Thuy Thu Lee in Brian de Palma's *Casualties of War*

performances, violent language, dynamic editing, an unrestrained Ennio Morricone musical score, are all deployed to maximum effect.

The horror story is not without a moral attitude. The real casualties of war are these degraded young men. The film, unfortunately, never reveals who, and what they were before the army,

but only makes clear that it is the war and their training that have turned them into rapists and murderers by totally desensitizing them.

Taking life — even the life of one of their own comrades who gets in the way — gives them not a quail. On the contrary, it can be a positively pleasurable fulfillment, without offence to their simple

ideal to be good soldiers and loyal to the group.

Sean Penn's habitual over-acting and naturally unsympathetic personality are appropriately harnessed to the role of the demented young sergeant who incites the abduction and killing.

Michael J. Fox, liberated from *Back to the Future* and such juvenile roles, is impressive as the

standout soldier, conveying deep confusion, inadequacy and guilt at his failure to check the others. His boyish eagerness is visibly worn away as he faces his moral impotence and the shocks of war.

Having created a powerful dramatic metaphor of the moral destruction of war, the film disappointingly tails away in a trite and conventional coda.

Sound and fury of a nightmare in which style is everything

The English-born Ridley Scott, director of *Alien*, *Blade Runner* and *Legend*, has created his own style of the fantasy-realistic designer film. Using neon colouring and foreshortening lenses, with a virtuosity acquired from years of experience in commercials, he transforms the real world into his own lurid future visions.

In *Black Rain* (18, Empire, Cannon Oxford Street, Baker Street, Baywater) he creates contrasting nightmare cities out of New York and Osaka. The American city is sombre and garbage-strewn; the Japanese is dazzling with lights — but each is a noisy turmoil of assorted traffic.

The unrelenting din is orchestrated to a heavy rock mass by the resourceful German composer Hans Zimmer, who has worked in startlingly different styles on films such as *Rain Man*, *Burning Secret* and *A World Apart*.

Sound, image and effect are everything. The story that justifies them is a crime pursuit thriller that would do for an episode in a television series. Michael Douglas is a tough, hysterical, maverick New York cop, deputised to escort a Yakuza killer back to Japan. After losing his prisoner at the airport, he joins up with a Japanese detective, whom he converts to his own unconventional methods.

The novelty (and also the commercial opportunism) of the film consists in its

Japanese setting: the casting of two popular Japanese stars, Ken Takakura and Yusaku Kida, opposite Douglas and Andy Garcia as his ill-fated partner, and the confrontation of Japanese discipline and honour with the out-of-control American, who justifies his own bent past with the reflection that "All New York is a grey area."

Yusaku (PG, Remor) is the second feature film of director Brian DePalma, a 35-year-old director from Burkina Faso, educated at film schools in Kiev and Paris. A Franco-Swiss-Burkina Faso co-production, its wide international success has included the lucrative Tokyo Film Festival prize awarded to a new director.

The film provides the now rare pleasure of discovering a quite unknown and exotic way of life, and being completely absorbed in its concerns. The setting is a remote village in the desert, the playground for a pair of the most spirited and irresistible of movie children.

Untouched by the taboos and prejudices of the grown-ups, they befriended an old lady — the Yaaba, or Grandmother, of the title — ostracized by the village and accused of witchcraft. Their only ally in protecting their friend from the villagers' persecution is the likeable local drunk and cuckold.

These lively characters — the shrew, the gossip, the fake healer, the faithless wife, the village seducer — all a little caricatured,

perhaps, in the children's fresh and fascinated vision, are universal, instantly familiar. They are so familiar, indeed, as human fellows that we are unsurprised by their different social organizations, marriage customs, traditions, folk medicines. And young Bile, with his mischief, bravery, intelligence, honesty, healthy scepticism, and the new kindness and tolerance he learns from his friendship with Yaaba, is a real hero.

Piravi (The British), at the ICA Cinema, is another film based on a real incident, from the time of Indira Gandhi's repressive State of Emergency: the disappearance of an engineering student while in police custody in Trivandrum, the capital of the Southern state of Kerala. From its appearance at the Cannes Festival last year, the film instantly established its young first-time director, Shaji, as a major international talent. He began his career as cameraman to another outstanding Kerala director, Aravindan, and like him goes simply by his family name.

Shaji concentrates on the effects of the disappearance upon the boy's family — his sick mother, sister and old father, who goes day after day to the bus stop, still hoping for his son's return.

Inspired, perhaps, by the natural richness of their country, the directors of Kerala all have a special sense of the harmony of people and nature. *Piravi*, as might be

expected from Shaji's known mastery as a cameraman, is visually distinctive and outstanding, dominated by the light and textures of the monsoon rain, which falls incessantly throughout the film.

He chose to shoot during the monsoon, he has said, because "you do not see the sun during the rain, and therefore we tend to lose our sense of time".

The performances are exceptional, the veteran actor Premji suggesting the intense relationship that has existed between the father and the son we will never see; a new actress, Archana, as the sister, whose investigations among her brother's contemporaries lead her in different directions from her father's more formal enquiries.

The passage of 27 years has not been kind to *Piravi*'s *8½* (15), which is revived at the Curzon Phoenix, Charing Cross Road. This exploration of the dreams, fantasies and memories of a 40-year-old film director suffering severe creative block was always a self-indulgent exercise; now it seems tediously garrulous.

The visual invention has lost its first impact and, at least in the print viewed, the lustre seems to have gone out of Gianni De Venanzo's famous black-and-white photography. Only individual images — the monstrous Serraghi's rumba on the beach; the hero as a boy bathed in wine; the little clown band in the inevitable circus finale — retain their magic.



Raggedy Rawney, directed by Bob Hoskins (left) with Dexter Fletcher

VIDEO BOX

Geoff Brown

A weekly selection of films recently released on video. The year refers to the date of first release, or in the case of television films, of first broadcast.

BABY BOOM (Warner, PG): An early specimen of Hollywood's recent infatuation with gurgling babies, featuring Diane Keaton as the power-hungry executive whose career is derailed when she inherits a relative's toddler. Calculated comedy, 1988.

THE BEST OF TIMES (Cineplex, 15): One that slipped away — a 1986 football drama with Robin Williams and Kurt Russell as high-school mates determined to avenge a game lost years before to their rival town. Another sports film from Ron Shelton, writer-director of *Bull Durham* here, though, the cliché dominates.

CHILD'S PLAY (Warner, 18): Outlandish, diverting thriller about a doll called Chucky imbued with the spirit of a mass murderer. More lively fare from Tom Holland, director of *Flight Night*, with Catherine Hicks and Chris Sarandon, 1988.

CUL-DE-SAC (Odyssey, 15): Roman Polanski's macabre comedy of humiliation, filmed on Holy Island, with Donald Pleasence as Françoise Dorléac as the mismatched couple whose hideaway is shattered by two wounded gangsters (Lionel Stander, Jack MacGowan), 1968.

GUNSHOE (Parkfield, 15): Albert Finney as the Scouse bingle caller whose dreams of being a Bogart-like private eye bear strange fruit. Neville Smith's script brilliantly walks the stylistic knife-edge between homage and

pastiche; attentive direction from Stephen Frears, 1971.

GLITS AND GLORY: THE RISE AND FALL OF OLIVER NORTH (CIC, PG):

David Keith as the Iran-Contra front man ("I'm a marine, not an intellectual"), whose only sin in this feature-length condensation of a CBS mini-series seems to be a surfeit of patriotism. Dull at first, amusingly facile once the fund diversion game is afoot. With Bernard Hughes as a wily William Casey, the hilarious impersonator of Ronald Reagan is, alas, uncredited, 1988.

THE MODERNS (Vestron, 15): Alan Rudolph's lush, multi-layered and mostly beguiling evocation of American bohemia and status-seekers in Paris during the 1920s. Keith Carradine, Linda Fiorentino, and John Lone head a cast of characters tied up in knots over life, love and art, 1989.

THE NAKED GUN (CIC, 15): Droll spoof of police thrillers from the *Airplane!* team of Jerry and David Zucker and Jim Abrahams (based on their *Police Squad* TV series). Leslie Nielsen beautifully sends up his poker-stiff acting style as the accident-prone detective out to foil a terrorist attack on the Queen, 1988.

THE RAGGEDY RAWNEY (Pathé, 15): Bob Hoskins's bizarre début as director — a downbeat ramble through Roman life and lore early in the century, with Dexter Fletcher as an army deserter hiding out with European spies (Cockney Hoskins included). Made in 1987, but only released last year.

REPULSION (Odyssey, 15): Polanski's brilliant, unsettling portrait of a mind disintegrating, with Catherine Deneuve as the repressed Belgian girl prey to nightmares, alone and vulnerable in a London flat. A memorable cameo from Patrick Wymark, 1965.

Fighting from within

Anant Singh, black South African director, tells Peter Guttridge how his commercial films subsidize his anti-apartheid projects

South Africa-based Anant Singh is the producer of such low budget exploitation films as *Reason to Die*, *Bedroom Eyes II*, *Thrilled to Death* and *Whisper*. South Africa's only black film producer, he is also a committed opponent of apartheid.

In 1984, he produced his first anti-apartheid film, *A Place for Weeping*. His latest, *Quest for Love*, opens in Britain soon, after screenings at the Montreal, Cannes and London film festivals. "I'm used to working with the visual medium," Singh explains. "It's a political medium which can show up the apartheid system inside and outside South Africa. But I have to do the other films too. I have to make the money from entertainment so that I can afford to do less commercial ones."

There has been nothing very sophisticated about Singh's political films. *A Place for Weeping* is clumsily made and earnestly anti-apartheid. It remains a powerful statement, however. "We made it for \$150,000," Singh says. "And I never expected to get the money back." The film has returned a profit and was the first South African film to be screened on the Home Box Office cable channel in the USA.

The second political film, *The Strick*, about an infantry patrol which gets a bloody come-uppance for wiping out a village, was banned by the South African Publications Control Board. It is more exploitation movie than political statement.

Quest for Love is something different. Based on a Gertrude Stein novel, *QED*, it merges the political with the personal in the story of a relationship between two South African women. One is a politically active journalist; the other, her gay friend, a marine biologist, has a different perspective on the political situation.

Singh says simply: "The director, Helena Nogueira, had written a script but she was having a tough time getting it made so I was very happy to make it happen."

Singh moved into production on the back of his distribution company. The ambitious entrepreneur, who started out in 1980 with a 16 mm movie rental store, is South Africa's largest independent film distributor. He

reached his dominant position by acquiring distribution rights of films in pre-production.

"When I moved into production my knowledge of good distribution was crucial to my success," he says. "You need to get the film out. It is essential that a film gets maximum visibility. I've been to the Soviet Union, Hungary and a lot of other places just to create an awareness."

Even so, his move into production in the mid-1980s was not easy. "Today the other producers won't eliminate or disallow me, but six years ago it was different. It was evident that the organization which existed put obstacles in my course. They say now they weren't politically motivated, I think they were. My success has probably been the best return."

Alongside more low-budget entertainment, he is developing two more anti-apartheid projects, both based on books by Fatima Meer. One is a film about Nelson Mandela. "Both films will be cast in South Africa. It would be inappropriate to do it any other way," he says.

Although he is increasingly involved with international productions outside South Africa, he is still closely involved with domestic productions — and with the problems of distribution. "It is important for me that both black and white should see my films. *A Place for Weeping* was probably the first film to have a simultaneous black and white release, in Soweto and Pretoria. It was interesting to see the different reactions. In Soweto you see the packed audience cheering. In Pretoria there's an audience of 12 and those 12 walk out half-way through."

The only time Singh has ever been in serious trouble for his film activities is for screening a James Bond film. In the early 1980s some films could only be screened for whites. Singh went to jail for ignoring the whites-only restriction on *Live and Let Die* and screening it for a black audience.

"The villain is played by black actor Yaphet Kotto," Singh says. "The problem was a scene where Yaphet slaps a white woman, Jane Seymour. The government didn't want black people seeing that. It might give them ideas."

Michael Douglas, the star of *Fatal Attraction* and now *Black Rain*, tells Simon Banner about his mid-life crisis

Too long in the limelight

When, as a student at the university of California, Michael Douglas was cast as a messenger in a

production of *Measure for Measure*, he delivered his lines so quickly that no one in the audience understood what he was saying. In real life, Douglas, who is now 45, still talks at break-neck speed, pacing about and pausing only to remove his glasses and rub his eyes or to search repeatedly for a packet of cigarettes he admits he probably never had.

On screen however, Douglas's delivery of his dialogue is always carefully measured, and his presence, even when obliged to rein in his restless energy, attention-demanding. In fact, after such films as *Fatal Attraction* and *Wall Street*, he has finally emerged from the shadow cast by a famous father — Kirk Douglas is now habitually referred to as "Michael's father" — and with two new films already on release in the States, he can even talk of retiring from the limelight for a couple of years, confident that audiences will not forget him.

"I'm having a bit of a mid-life crisis," he says. "I'd like to spend more time with my son, maybe read a novel, just for the sake of it rather than seeing if it can be adapted for a film; that kind of thing. I've been working very hard for 20 years."

Protestations of hard work from film stars can often be disregarded, and certainly the Michael Douglas film which is

currently a step ahead of the competition at the American box-office, the black comedy *The War of The Roses*, cannot have strained him unduly.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that Michael Douglas's other film of the moment (and the first of them to be released in Britain), the breathlessly fast thriller *Black Rain* (reviewed above), was very hard work, not least because, as Douglas puts it, he appears in "just about every scene of the goddamned movie".

He is cast as Nick Conklin, a disenchanted, well-nigh burnt-out New York cop who takes a Japanese mob leader back to Japan and then has to recapture him when he escapes. Though Method actor, Douglas gained 15 pounds in weight for the role and also spent a few weeks alongside a New York homicide detective to get the feel of the character he was to play. He was out on the beat on a night when two city policemen were shot dead.

When Douglas came across a recently divorced detective curled up in a sleeping-bag in the locker-room of his police station, he understood another aspect of Conklin's character. The real-life detective's ex-wife had kept the family home while he was unable to afford to rent even a single room. In *Black Rain*, the divorced Conklin, under investigation for having raked off the odd few hundred dollars from assorted drug busts, justifies his light-fingered attitudes by reference to the crippling burden of his alimony payments and instalments on the children's teeth-braces.

As for the practical business of filming *Black Rain*, working in Japan was, Douglas freely admits, "nightmarish". British director Ridley Scott had to direct his Japanese actors through an interpreter and the film's producers had similar communication problems when it came to securing locations. When they wanted to shoot in Osaka's nightclub district they were restricted to working between the hours of three and six in the morning. Their time up, the police would clear the set whether the film-makers had finished their work or not.

"The irony," says Douglas, "is

that the problems we had making the film exactly parallel the difficulty the character I play has in coming to terms with the cultural and social differences between the Japanese and Americans."

While *Black Rain* undoubtedly does kick up some dust around several topical issues — most notably Japanese distaste for their own post-war Americanization — is the film any more than a good-looking thriller?

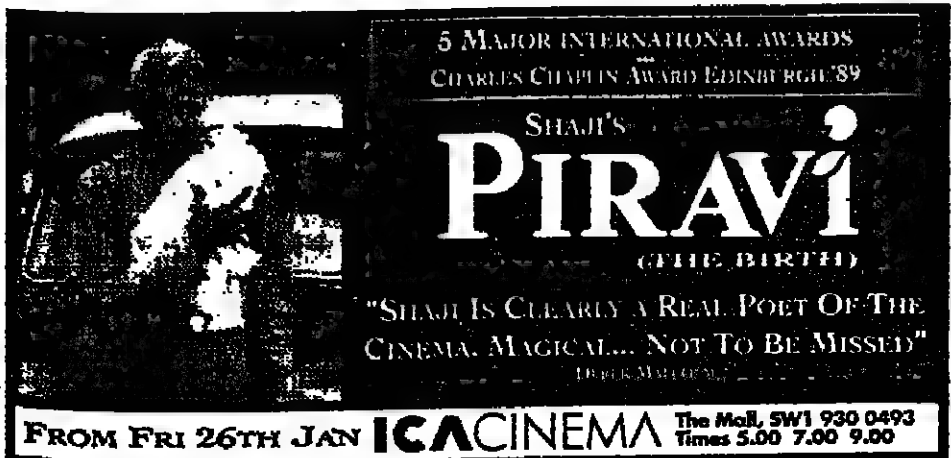
Douglas seems to think not. "It's always dangerous for foreigners to attempt movies about someone else's culture," he says. "I suppose I saw *Black Rain* more as an interesting character study than anything else." And that character, he is proud to say, remains unattractive almost to the end. "It's a much greater challenge winning back an audience's support," he explains, "than it is to play someone they like from the very first reel. Nick Conklin is a dark son-of-a-bitch, in fact, and I thought that if I could play him I could probably play any type of role at all."

With all his leisure plans, Douglas does not expect to put his belief in his own versatility to the test for at least 18 months. Even so, his production company has four different films ready to shoot and Douglas will oversee production of them all.

Back in the Seventies he won an Oscar as producer of the hugely successful *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and in the mid-Eighties he both produced and acted in the two films which helped establish him as a truly popular star, *Romancing The Stone* and *Jewel of the Nile*.

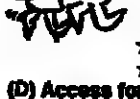
Michael Douglas may yet make acting a sideline to further producing, though what he will never do again, he insists, is take on day-to-day production of a film he is also acting in.

"You talk about hard work," he says, returning to a favourite theme, "now that's the worst. I always remember trying to do a love scene with Kathleen Turner on *Romancing The Stone* and having to break off for negotiations about wages or to sort out problems with a location. If you act and produce at the same time, you just don't enjoy either."

Douglas (left) with co-star Andy Garcia in a scene from *Black Rain*

INFORMATION SERVICE

This selective guide to entertainment and events throughout Britain appears from Monday to Friday, followed in the Review section on Saturday by a preview of the week ahead. Items should be sent to The Times Information Service, PO Box 7, 1 Virginia Street, London E1 9XN



BOOKING KEY
★ Seats available
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THEATRE
LONDON

★ **DIVERSIONS AND DELIGHTS:** Oscar Wilde looks back on his life in Donald Sinden's one-man show. Limited season. Playhouse Theatre, Northumberland Ave, WC2 (01-838 4471). Tube: Embankment. Mon-Sat 8pm, £5-15. (D)

★ **JEFFREY BERNARD IS UNWELL:** Peter O'Toole gives his best and funniest performance in years as the well-known man-about-town locked into his favourite pub overnight and meeting figures from his past. Apollo Theatre, Shaftesbury Ave, W1 (01-437 2863). Tube: Piccadilly Circus. Mon-Fri 8.30-11pm, Sat 8.45-11.15pm, mat Sat 5.30-8pm, £5-15.

★ **KRAPP'S LAST TAPE:** David Warfield in a most successful Beckett double-bill. Cottesloe Theatre, Shaftesbury Ave, W1 (01-437 2863). Tube: Piccadilly Circus. Mon-Fri 8.30-11pm, Sat 8.45-11.15pm, mat Sat 5.30-8pm, £5-15.

★ **MA RAINY'S BLACK BOTTOM:** Carol Woods as the legendary blues singer in August Wilson's Pulitzer Prize-winning about black musicians in white. National Theatre (Cottesloe), South Bank, SE1 (01-828 2252). Tube: Waterloo. Thurs-Sat 7.30pm, mat Sat 2.30pm, £5.50, in repertoire. (D)

★ **OUR COUNTRY'S GOOD:** Triple award-winning play by Timberlake Wertenbaker, set in New South Wales 200 years ago where a batch of convicts are ordered to become citizens. Cottesloe Theatre, Shaftesbury Ave, W1 (01-437 2863). Tube: Piccadilly Circus. Mon-Fri 8.30-11pm, Sat 8.45-11.15pm, mat Sat 5.30-8pm, £5-15.

★ **RETURN TO THE FORBIDDEN PLANET:** Cut it crams *The Tempest*, sci-fi and rock 'n' roll into a crazy show. Cambridge Theatre, Seven Dials, WC2 (01-379 5229). Tube: Leicester Square. Mon-Fri 8.10-10.20pm, Sat 8.30-11pm, mat Sat 5.30-8pm, £7.50-15.50. (D)

LONG RUNNERS:
★ *Cats*: New London Theatre (01-405 6111).
★ *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*: Ambassador Theatre (01-836 5111).
★ *My Darling Clementine*: Apollo Theatre (01-437 2863).
★ *My Darling Clementine*: Apollo Theatre (01-437 2863).
★ *My Darling Clementine*: Apollo Theatre (01-437 2863).

★ **Run For Your Wife:** Whitfield Theatre (01-567 1118).
★ **Starlight Express:** Apollo Theatre (01-437 2863).

OUT OF TOWN

BASINGSTOKE: ★ The importance of Being Ernest: Ian Mullin's production of our wisest comedy, with Josephine Teyson moulding horror at the handbag. Haymarket Theatre, Wote St (0256 465566). Thurs-Sat 7.45pm, mat Sat 4pm, £7. (D)

GLASGOW: ★ *Shogun*: Actor Fugard's celebrated drama of two South African sons of a coloured mother, one white, the other black. Studio Theatre, Playhouse, Eagle Centre (0352 953278). Mon-Sat 7.30pm, £4. (D)

FILMS

★ **Also on national release**
★ **Advance booking possible**

CAT CHASER (18): High-octane version of an Elmore Leonard thriller, with Peter Weller as a Florida teenager sucked into a plot to rob a gangster of hidden money. With Kelly McGillis; director Abel Ferrara (83 mins).
Cineplex Cinema (01-830 0631).
Progs 2.15, 4.50, 7.25.

THE COOK, THE THEFT, HIS WIFE ANOTHER LOVER (18): Peter Greenaway's bold, modern tale of love, revenge and haute cuisine. With Richard Bohringer (the cook), Michael Gambon (the thief), Helen Mirren (the wife) and

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(the thief), Helen Mirren (the wife) and

Alan Howard (her lover) (120 mins).
Pleasance (01-437 3561). Progs 2.00, 5.00, 8.00.
Remix (01-837 8402). Progs 1.10, 3.35, 6.05, 8.40.
Screen on Baker Street (01-835 2772).
Progs 3.10, 6.00, 8.35.

★ **THE DELINQUENTS (12):** A routine story of defiant teenagers in the Fifties with Kylie Minogue (80 mins).
Cannon Oxford St (01-636 0310). Progs 12.45, 3.20, 5.55, 8.30.
Werner West End (01-439 0791).
Progs 1.15, 3.40, 6.05, 8.30.
Wavelengths 7 (01-792 3303). Progs 1.35, 6.35.

★ **DRY WHITE SEASON (15):** Powerful apartheid thriller from Andre Brink's novel, with Donald Sutherland as a mild schoolteacher whose conscience is finally stirred. Directed by Euzhan Palcy. With a juicy cameo from Martin Brando (108 mins).
Cannon Chelsea (01-361 1026). Progs 1.35, 4.15, 7.15, 9.40.
Carson West End (01-439 4805). Progs 2.00, 4.10, 6.20, 8.40.
Screen on the Green (01-226 3520).
Progs 3.50, 6.20, 8.45.

★ **FELLOW TRAVELLER (15):** Michael Eaton's intriguing drama about the blacklisted actor, directed by Philip Saville, with Hart Bochner and Ron Silver as Hollywood radicals who are coping with the McCarthy nightmare (80 mins).
Metro (01-437 0757). Progs 2.45, 4.45, 6.45, 8.45.

★ **FIELD OF DREAMS (PG):** Overly cosy Americana, with Kevin Costner as a farmer encouraged by a celestial voice to use his cornfield for a baseball pitch. Directed by Phil Alden Robinson (108 mins).
Cannon Haymarket (01-839 1827).
Progs 1.25, 5.50, 8.15, 8.45.

★ **HENRY V (PG):** Visually drab version of Shakespeare's play from wunderkind Kenneth Branagh, who directs and stars. With Paul Scofield (137 mins).
Thompson, Judi Dench (137 mins).
Carson Mayfair (01-498 3737). Progs 2.30, 5.45, 8.30.

★ **JESUS OF MONTREAL (18):** An updated version of a Passion Play caused controversy in Montreal. Strained satirical fireworks from Dany Aron, Canadian director of *The Decline of the American Empire* (120 mins).
Lumiere (01-836 0881). Film at 1.00, 3.30, 6.05, 8.40.
Cineplex Plaza (01-496 2443). Progs 1.00, 3.30, 6.05, 8.40.
Gate (01-727 4043). Progs 1.15, 3.45, 6.15, 8.45.

★ **ROSALIE GOES SHOPPING (15):** Broad satire from director Percy Aron and the ample Marianne Sägebarth (84 mins).
Cinema Shaftesbury Ave (01-836 5279).
Progs 1.30, 3.40, 6.00, 8.20.
Chelsea Cinema (01-361 3742). Progs 2.25, 4.30, 6.40, 8.55.
Screen on the Green (01-433 3449). Progs 2.55, 4.55, 7.05, 9.00.

★ **WILT (15):** Wild black farce from Tom Sharpe's comic novel, with Griff Rhys-Jones as the spongy hero set up for a murder, and Mel Smith as the investigating detective, directed by Michael Tuchner (82 mins).
Cannon Panton Street (01-520 0631).
Progs 1.50, 4.00, 6.05, 8.15, 10.20.

ROCK

★ **ICE-T:** Although Niggers With Attitude are the most visible exponents of L.A.'s "gangster rap" scene, it is the imposing Ice-T who created "crime raps" and who, as executive manager of his own Rhyme Syndicate record label, now guides both an artist and a star over the movement. Astoria, 339 Roundway Road, Leeds (0832 490382). 8pm, £3.50.

★ **THE ALARM:** Wales's biggest rock export continues to celebrate a romantic notion of his Celtic heritage, but the new single "Love Don't Come Easy" released this week, sounds tailor-made for the American market. St George's Hall, Hall In Bradford (0274 75200). 7.30pm, £7-8.

★ **SIMPLY RED:** Nick Hurn's blues-eyed soul experience. NEC, Birmingham (021 780 4133). 7.30pm, £12-14.

★ **THE HOUSE OF LOVE:** Guitarist Terry Bickers resigned before Christmas and is now replaced by Simon Walker (the Dave Howard Singers). New single, a revamped version of "Shine On", released this week. Drill Hall, Broadways, Lincoln (0522 24353). 7.30pm, £5.

In Monroe's footsteps



Jerry Hall (above) makes her British stage debut tonight as Cherie, the role played by Marilyn Monroe in the film of William Inge's play *Bus Stop*. The production, which has been touring the United States, opens in Watford and transfers next month to the Lyric Theatre, London. Miss Hall is famous for being a model and girlfriend of Mick Jagger but her film appearances have been various and include roles in *Urban Cowboy* and *Batman*. In *Bus Stop* she plays a nightclub singer kidnapped by a cowboy (Shane Cassidy) intent on taking her off to his ranch to marry her. Following a well-tried dramatic convention, had

JAZZ

★ **3RD JAZZ-POETRY FESTIVAL:** (see below)

★ **THE THERMOMIX:** Poets Square, London W11 (01-630 5368). 8.30pm, £3.50.

★ **POPEY NOVEL:** Poet Stan Tracey plays a new extended work, inspired by the history of Portsmouth, and commissioned by the city's Jazz Society. Phoenix's, The Pyramid Centre, Southsea (0203 25558). 8pm, £3.

★ **LOUIS STEWART:** A quintet performance by the Irish guitarist whose CD includes songs with Gerry Goodman and George Shearing. Colchester Jazz Club, The Arts Centre, Church Street (0206 577801). 8.30pm, £4.

★ **TONY KINSEY:** In action with John Dankworth earlier this month, the drummer appears with his own quintet featuring pianist John Higgs. The Studio, Northampton Arts Centre, South Lane South (0804 407444). 8pm, £3.

★ **MAX MURPHY:** Robert Max (cello) and Zoe Solomon (piano) play Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto* and Chopin's *Adagio and Allegro* Op 70 and Dutilleul's *Symphonie sur le Nom de Sacher*. Logan Hall, Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1 (01-536 1500). 1.30-2.15pm, free.

★ **WORLD SERIES:** In the IC World Class series James Blair conducts the Young Musicians' Symphony Orchestra in Prokofiev's *Symphony No 1* and Bach's *Concerto for Three Violins*, BWV 1064 (Yehudi Menuhin, Jiji Hattori, Sarah Evans, soloists). Mendham also conducts Brahms's *Symphony No 4*. Festival Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (01-828 8800). 7.30-9.20pm, £4.50-12.50. (D)

★ **MANCHESTER MAHLER:** Mahler's *Symphony No 2* "The Resurrection" is heard from the Halle Choir, Orchestra and soloists under Stanislaw Skrowaczewski. Free Trade Hall, Peter Street, Manchester (061 834 1719). 7.30pm, £2.50-14. (D)

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CONCERTS

★ **MAX MURPHY:** Robert Max (cello) and Zoe Solomon (piano) play Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto* and Chopin's *Adagio and Allegro* Op 70 and Dutilleul's *Symphonie sur le Nom de Sacher*. Logan Hall, Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1 (01-536 1500). 1.30-2.15pm, free.

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TELEVISION & RADIO

Compiled by Peter Dear and Gillian Maxey

Play it again, Barry

Peter Waymark

Hardly have the guests checked into the plush Ellington Park Hotel in Warwickshire than the resident pianist, Barrington (call me Barry) Brown, is tinkling out their favourite tunes on the Steinway. And as Joanna Clinton-Davis shows in her 40 Minutes film *He's Playing Our Song* (BBC2, 9.30pm), behind every number is a story. Roger's favourite is "Confidentially", the signature tune of his comedian uncle, the late Reg Dixon. It is the cue for memories of Reg, whom Roger describes (with pardonable family exaggeration) as England's Bing Crosby. He sounds more like George Formby, but Reg was a big name in the Forties, earning £2,000 a week - and that was in Coventry. Roger



Nostalgic memories: Reg Dixon, a big name in the Forties (BBC2, 9.30pm)

and two of Reg's elderly brothers revisit the cobbled street where Reg composed "Confidentially" one night as he was walking home from the theatre. But enough of nostalgia. Back to the Ellington Park and who is this, scribbling away at his next best-seller, but Jeffrey Archer. He says the hotel is the ideal place for writing, as long as people don't bother him. Ms Clinton-Davis and her camera team take the hint, leaving Archer to his Beethoven songs. A non-nonsense Yorkshireman called Tom, earlier heard ordering spotted dick and custard, tells Barrington Brown to play some decent ballad music. By this he means "Autumn Leaves", though Vera Lynn might have been more suitable accompaniment to his memories of the Second World War. The guests come and go but Barry continues, smiling over his keyboard and conjuring up "a little inner warmth".

● This Week (ITV, 8.30pm) highlights what many may feel is an unacceptable loophole in the law which allows anyone to foster children without official vetting. Estimates of the extent of private fostering suggest that as many as 30,000 children and babies may be involved. Many have West African parents, who arrive in Britain as students or to work and farm out their offspring to the lowest bidder. Local authorities have neither the resources nor the powers to carry out effective monitoring. The potential for abuse is enormous. Margaret Gilmore's report concentrates on four youngsters, three of whom were forced to leave their foster homes while the programme was being made. One of them disappeared. The fourth child was hidden every time the health visitor called.

BBC

8.30 Breakfast News and Good Morning Britain. Highlights of the overnight action in Auckland, introduced by Steve Rider, and summaries by David Icke at 8.30, 7.30 and 6.30. Business news at 6.30, 7.00 and 8.00. Regional and national news summaries at 7.30 and 8.30.

8.55 Regional news and weather followed by Open Air. Mary Whitehouse is in the studio to discuss her views on recent television programmes.

9.30 Kilroy. Robert Kilroy-Silk chairs a studio discussion on a topical subject.

10.00 News and weather followed by Going for Gold (1).

10.25 Peter's BBC, presented by Simon Parkin, begins with Playdays (1) 10.30 Roobarb (1) 10.55 Five to Eleven. Iain Cuthbertson with a reading.

11.00 News and weather followed by Open Air. Eamonn Holmes and Jayne Irving invite viewers to call in to BBC2's drama serial *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.

12.00 News and weather followed by Commonwealth Games. Helen Rollason introduces some of the preliminary rounds of sporting events.

1.00 One O'Clock News with Philip Hayton. Weather.

1.30 Neighbours. Katie is determined to find out where Todd is sneaking off to. (Continued) 1.40 The Big Gold. Henry Kelly with another round of the European general knowledge quiz show.

2.15 Film: *The Grey Fox* (1982), starring Richard Farnsworth. Award-winning Canadian drama, based on fact, about a gentleman outlaw who, in 1801, after spending half his life in San Quentin prison, finds that all his high-wind tales are out-dated. Directed by Philip Borsoos.

3.45 Carpool. 3.50 Dolly Duck's Disco Day (1) 3.55 Charlie Chalk (1) 4.10 Jeopardy! 4.20 The New York Times. Episodes four.

5.00 Newsround 5.05 The Peter. (Continued) 5.35 Neighbours (1). (Continued) 5.50 The O'Clock News with Anna Ford and Andrew Harvey. Weather.

6.30 Newsround South East. 7.00 Commonwealth Games Today. Highlights from the day's action in Auckland, New Zealand, includes Sharnae Davies attempting to win a medal in the first of the five events (100m freestyle). There is also the best of boxing, badminton, bowls, cycling, shooting and weightlifting action. Presented by Desmond Lynam.

8.00 EastEnders. Worried at what the implications will be if Danny moves in with Michelle, Pauline and Arthur are anxious to talk to her. Meanwhile, Kathy is worried about Cindy's run-down state. (Continued) 8.30 May to December. Alec's daughter is worried that her father is overdoing things and exerting himself too much when it comes to keeping pace with Zed. Featuring Arthur Rodgers, Carolyn Pickles and Eve Matheson. (Continued) 9.00 News O'Clock News with Martin Lewis. Regional news and weather.

9.30 One Foot in the Grave. 10.15 The Bedlam. Victor is still referring to the drawbacks that can be part and parcel of early retirement and, when he gets locked in the shed with Margaret for three hours, he finally thinks he has lost his mind. With Richard Wilson and Annabel Crook.

10.00 Question Time. Peter Staines is joined around the table by Douglas Hurd, Foreign Secretary; Lord Jenkins; Marjorie Mowlam, Labour trade and industry spokesman; and the editor of *The Sunday Times*, Andrew Neil. Followed by Weather.

1.00 Commonwealth Games. Steve Fink introduces sporting action from the second day of the Commonwealth Games, including five more swimming finals and the men's and women's springboard diving finals. There is also boxing, basketball and bowls. See the latest results on shooting and weightlifting. Ends at 6.30.

BBC

8.00 TV-am begins with News and Good Morning Britain introduced by Linda Mitchell and, from 7.00, by Mike Morris and Lorraine Kelly. Includes news at 8.30, 7.00, 7.30, 8.00, 8.30 and 9.00. At 8.30 there is the fourth part of the Paul McCartney interview. After him includes Claire Rayner on bringing new life to existing relationships.

9.25 Lucky Ladders. Quiz game show. 9.55 The Peter. (Continued) 10.00 The Peter. (Continued) 10.25 The Peter. (Continued) 10.50 The Peter. (Continued) 11.00 The Peter. (Continued) 11.25 The Peter. (Continued) 11.50 The Peter. (Continued) 12.00 The Peter. (Continued) 12.25 The Peter. (Continued) 12.50 The Peter. (Continued) 1.00 The Peter. (Continued) 1.25 The Peter. (Continued) 1.50 The Peter. (Continued) 2.00 The Peter. (Continued) 2.25 The Peter. (Continued) 2.50 The Peter. (Continued) 3.00 The Peter. (Continued) 3.25 The Peter. (Continued) 3.50 The Peter. (Continued) 4.00 The Peter. (Continued) 4.25 The Peter. (Continued) 4.50 The Peter. (Continued) 5.00 The Peter. (Continued) 5.25 The Peter. (Continued) 5.50 The Peter. (Continued) 6.00 The Peter. (Continued) 6.25 The Peter. (Continued) 6.50 The Peter. (Continued) 7.00 The Peter. (Continued) 7.25 The Peter. (Continued) 7.50 The Peter. (Continued) 8.00 The Peter. (Continued) 8.25 The Peter. (Continued) 8.50 The Peter. 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Heavy snowfalls cause traffic chaos

Continued from page 1
went right into the building. It sounded like a gas explosion at first, and when we heard it we dashed outside.

"I didn't realize it was a helicopter at first. It hit the flats, went down to the ground and hit a big brick box where they have the power for the buildings."

The building it hit, known locally as "The Thumb", is occupied mainly by wealthy elderly people and earned its nickname because locals believe it sticks out like a sore thumb.

Assistant Chief Constable Dickson said: "There was a violent storm, snowy and very windy. At the moment information is very sketchy but we think the helicopter was flying below the weather - investigations are obviously being carried out along that line."

"The helicopter then struck the building and fell to the ground at McLaren Court."

The marked helicopter normally used by the police for traffic surveillance in the city was having its carburettor repaired at the time.

Mr Edward McHugh, aged 23, who lives nearby, said: "The helicopter was swaying about 200 ft in the air... it had lost power and the rotor blades were barely moving. It was coming down head-first in a slow glide. It clipped the building and then there was a huge bang as it smashed into the ground. Smoke was pouring from the front end of the helicopter, but there was no fire."

The crash comes as the Home Office investigates the costs and benefits of setting up a national police air force.

The heaviest snowfall of the winter caused traffic chaos in many parts of the country but put the smile back on the face of the hard-pressed skiing industry yesterday.

At the main Aviemore re-



Cars stranded in Glasgow yesterday in the heaviest snowfall this winter. The city was one of the worst-hit areas of Scotland with snow causing rail delays.

sort in Scotland overnight falls of six inches brought skiers out in droves for the first real session of the season and came just in time for the start of the annual husky dog racing championships at the Highland centre today.

As wintry weather took a grip, the worst-hit areas in-

cluded the south of Scotland and north Wales where roads were blocked and trains delayed, while southern England and Northern Ireland saw their first snowfall of the winter. But forecasters were unable to predict whether the cold snap would continue beyond the next few days.

Glasgow, Clydeside and Edinburgh were among the worst-hit areas of Scotland with snow blocking roads and causing rail delays. All roads in the Peak District of Derbyshire were badly affected, said police and motoring organizations. Heavy snowfalls across

much of Northern Ireland caused power cuts lasting several hours in Counties Down, Armagh, Antrim, Tyrone and Fermanagh. Most of the Continent has so far escaped the wintry weather affecting northern and central areas of Britain. The London Weather Centre said last night

that France and Germany were mainly cloudy but dry, although some rain had fallen in hilly areas to the north of the Alps which could be expected to fall as snow in the mountains. That means that ski resorts, starved of snow, can expect a temporary respite.

Tough challenge for post-revolutionary Romania

Mass protest in Bucharest over poll decision

From Christopher Walker
Bucharest

Political turmoil in post-revolutionary Romania deepened yesterday when crowds again took to the streets to protest against the decision of the ruling National Salvation Front to stand in the May general election and Mrs Doina Cornea, the country's best-known dissident, resigned in protest.

Mrs Cornea, aged 60, from the town of Cluj, announced that she was standing down immediately from the national council of the 145-member Front and from her position as its honorary president in her home region.

Mrs Cornea declared that she was making her protest against the "inequality" that would result from the Front's decision to contest the poll. She also stated she did not want any part in the "fight for power".

Hours after her resignation was

made public, thousands of angry demonstrators once again took to the freezing streets of Bucharest demanding "elections without the Front" and chanting "Down with Iliescu", a reference to Mr Ion Iliescu, the interim president and a former senior figure in the old Communist Party.

As fog blanketed the city during the afternoon, different crowds were marching in several sections of the city venting their anger at the Front. There was no co-ordination in the protests, one of which consisted of around 2,000 students whose leaders alleged that the Front was enabling old-style communist collaborators to remain at the national helm.

The city centre headquarters of the largest of the new political groupings, the revived National Peasants' Party, was besieged by supporters demanding that the

Front's decision be overturned. Many had travelled to Bucharest by overnight train from outlying areas.

A leading official of the party, which has already attracted more than 180,000 members, announced that it would boycott the Round Table planned by the Front for next Saturday to discuss Romania's path to democracy. He also said the

parties would organize a mass anti-Front rally in the capital on Sunday.

As party members shouted "Down with the mafia" and "Down with the Communist Front", Mr Corneliu Coposu, the leader of the Peasants' Party, aged 74, read a communiqué calling on the Front to resign and hand power over to a neutral body which would not seek election. He accused the interim

government of "stealing the victory of the Romanian youth" and urged its leadership to admit they could not both act as the interim administration and stand for power.

Across Romania's newly formed and fragile political spectrum, members of the 15 registered parties alleged the Front's decision was a ploy to perpetuate the power of the communist party. Many claimed to see the hand of the Kremlin in the decision to put forward candidates.

Anger at the Front's decision, announced without prior consultation, was also expressed by the National Liberal Party, another of Romania's historic groupings revived to fight the election.

After an emergency meeting, Mr Bernard Popescu, aged 53, a senior organizer, accused the Front of using Mrs Cornea's reputation in its early days to secure credibility. It was unclear last night whether

the provisional government would give permission for Sunday's planned anti-Front demonstration. Under new decrees, all marches have to be approved 48 hours in advance if they are to be legal.

Attacks on the Front were not restricted to the fledgling parties. Yesterday's *Romania Libera*, one of the main Bucharest papers, reinforced its bitter campaign to force the exit of Mr Dumitru Mazilu, the Front's vice-president, whom it claimed covered up a senior rank in the Securitate.

Mr Mazilu has now threatened to sue the paper for libel and has accused it of being manipulated by ex-Securitate officials, who he claimed had infiltrated the Foreign Ministry and were now attempting to smear his character because of his record as an outspoken critic of Nicolae Ceausescu's appalling human rights record.

Political sketch

Welcome again to Family Favourites

Just as a drowning man is supposed to see, at one instant, his whole life before him, so yesterday in the Commons we were offered a pot-pourri of all the old familiar tunes performed by all the old familiar crooners. It was a sort of parliamentary *These You Have Loved*.

There was Dave Nellist (Lab, Coventry SE) shouting for non-payment of poll-tax, to Tory cries of "shame". There was the magnificently blood-curdling David Evans (C, Welwyn & Hatfield) and Anthony Beaumont-Dark (C, Selly Oak) offering identical views about the homeless: one in the accents of an ironmonger who has not made it into the local golf-club; the latter in the accents of an ironmonger who has.

Let the homeless consult the *Birmingham Evening Mail*, said Selly Oak, where, under "Situations Vacant", they would find news to their advantage.

"This Government's done quite enough for the homeless", said Hatfield.

There was Skinner. There was Banks - when isn't there? There was the new Housing Minister, Michael Spicer, with some nicely shampooed and blow-dried information about "the thrust of a whole range of our policies", "rooflessness, a pan-European problem" and "a multitude of schemes" and "a whole panoply of policies".

There was the great Nicholas Soames (C, Crawley) being sensible about a scheme for community projects in new towns, and Joe Ashton (Lab, Basildon) being plumb crazy about a scheme to make shopkeepers take the names and addresses of people who bought aerosol spray-paint so that graffiti-artists could be tracked down.

"What trail of evidence, Holmes, led you from that corner-shop in Clacton to the brilliant deduction that this railway carriage was disguised by Wayne Spigg of Railway Carriages, Crew?"

"Elementary, my dear Watson. Who else would use that shade of Aubergine Provencal?"

And there was Junior Environment Minister, David Trippier, peering sternly over his spectacles

and, in the tones of a Lancashire schoolmaster, telling Alun Michael (Lab, Cardiff S & Penarth) that there was "a committee set up to study noise" which would be looking into "certain aspects of noise", and reporting.

They called it "Questions to the Secretary of State for the Environment". They could have called it *Kilroy, Have A Go or Opportunity Knocks* for all it mattered.

And your sketchwriter has a new and better name for what followed. It was - and is - laughingly known as "Points of Order", but in your sketchwriter's view it ought to be called what it increasingly is, these days: *Playtime*.

Let me briefly explain. After Questions, any MP who has a matter to pursue which is not so much a question (or opinion) about the subjects of debate themselves, as a gripe about the way Parliament organizes itself to debate them, can put his question to Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker more or less has to take the intervention, as (though he may guess) he cannot know whether it is a bogus "point of order" - a political speechette masquerading as a procedural point - until he has heard it. But, usually, that is just what it turns out to be...

"Mr Speaker, was it in order for the Employment Secretary to spend the usual load of rubbish about his fake 'employment statistics'?"

"Order! That is not a matter for me." Nor is it. But it's too late! The hon member has made his point. The system, in short, is open to abuse. The Speaker alone has insufficient powers to regulate it. It can only operate properly if MPs show self-discipline. A squad of Labour MPs don't and the Tories (some, I suspect, to make exactly this point) increasingly don't either.

TV cameras and self-discipline don't mix. "Points of Order" are getting longer, rowdier, and more fatuous by the day, and it cannot go on. It will have to be banned.

Or licensed. Your sketchwriter's proposal is that we call it what it is - *Playtime* - and limit it to half-an-hour on Mondays and Wednesdays. Any better ideas?

Matthew Parris

Airline charges up 40%

Continued from page 1

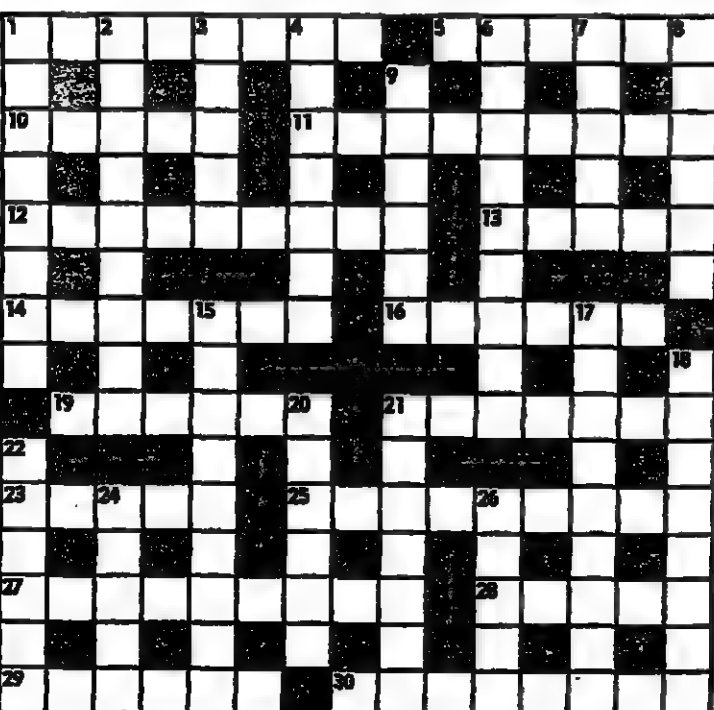
a series of sharp price rises higher than the general level of inflation which have affected airlines in recent months.

Landing fees are to rise by up to 65 per cent for small aircraft at Heathrow and Gatwick as BAA brings in a uniform charge of £328 per landing. For large jets such as

the Boeing 747, for example, the increase is very small and can be shared among all its passengers. But a small 49-seat De Havilland Dash 7 of Brymon Airways, for example, will have to pay 45 per cent more.

The Monopolies and Mergers Commission is investigating navigation charges.

THE TIMES CROSSWORD PUZZLE NO 18,200



- ACROSS**
- Small group infiltrating Irish loyalists (6).
 - It's available in pearls, priced higher than rubies (6).
 - Italian writing in French (5).
 - Designer cutlery finally put in catalogue (9).
 - Struggle in winter broadcast to get audience (9).
 - Possibly one silk fabric or another used in church (5).
 - Free to be defamatory about artist (7).
 - Continue to yearn for a position in the field (4,2).
 - D'Artagnan, for example, as one who receives the queen (6).
 - Special rate available in the battle zone (7).
 - Old coin as source of financial support (5).
 - Communist planners built poor construction (9).
- DOWN**
- Minor part of speech is in writing at bottom of page (8).
 - Schedule for US magazine board (9).
 - Private's on target (5).
 - Minor gets four or six in test (7).
 - Artlessness of some of Blake's songs (9).
 - Played attacking shot for crowd (5).
 - Violent action has potential to give you the edge (6).
 - Initially, this has the sound of an open profession (6).
 - Form new congregation with spiritual instruction and prayer (9).
 - Be more than exhausted, more stupefied (9).
 - Rally jolly supportive of engineers' leader (8).
 - Forcibly remove chest (3,3).
 - Call for action from viewers (5-2).
 - One removes locks and bolt to take place over, finally (6).
 - Outfit's increase in strength (3-2).
 - Achieved harmony in what one did (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 18,199

Across: 1. BASSI, 2. EXIS, 3. MAN, 4. ABER, 5. XIA, 6. A, 7. CHE, 8. VALIER, 9. THRU, 10. K, 11. D, 12. P, 13. T, 14. C, 15. H, 16. R, 17. M, 18. A, 19. P, 20. L, 21. O, 22. F, 23. F, 24. V, 25. A, 26. G, 27. A, 28. B, 29. O, 30. N, 31. D, 32. O, 33. N, 34. D, 35. I, 36. N, 37. G, 38. I, 39. N, 40. G, 41. S, 42. T, 43. R, 44. E, 45. S, 46. P, 47. A, 48. R, 49. T, 50. M, 51. E, 52. N, 53. T, 54. I, 55. O, 56. N, 57. G, 58. I, 59. N, 60. G, 61. S, 62. T, 63. R, 64. E, 65. S, 66. P, 67. A, 68. R, 69. T, 70. M, 71. E, 72. N, 73. G, 74. I, 75. O, 76. N, 77. G, 78. I, 79. S, 80. T, 81. R, 82. E, 83. S, 84. P, 85. A, 86. R, 87. T, 88. M, 89. E, 90. N, 91. G, 92. I, 93. S, 94. T, 95. R, 96. E, 97. S, 98. P, 99. A, 100. R, 101. T, 102. M, 103. E, 104. N, 105. G, 106. I, 107. S, 108. T, 109. R, 110. E, 111. S, 112. P, 113. A, 114. R, 115. T, 116. M, 117. E, 118. N, 119. G, 120. I, 121. S, 122. T, 123. R, 124. E, 125. S, 126. P, 127. A, 128. R, 129. T, 130. M, 131. E, 132. N, 133. G, 134. 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TEMPUS

Chrysalis strikes the wrong chord

It requires a certain *chutzpah*, of which Mr Chris Wright of Chrysalis Group has admittedly never been short, to accompany a set of results as comprehensively dire as yesterday's with such an upbeat statement.

It requires quite another quality — folly, perhaps — to announce that on the back of an £11.5 million pre-tax loss in the latest financial year, you plan to enter the riskier arena of commercial television.

The results compare with a pre-tax profit of £1.8 million in the previous 14 months, although the start of the decline came before that.

Mr Wright has need to appear upbeat. Tales of Chrysalis' woes have reached the ears of some of his biggest stars. Some have decided to delay record releases until the position is clearer, and at least one, Huey Lewis, is expected to quit the label soon.

The sale of half of Chrysalis Record Companies, the core business, to Thorn EMI last summer only exacerbated the uncertainty by prompting a switch from the CBS distributor network to Capitol EMI, again delaying much-needed releases.

Meanwhile, the American company was hit by the move to compact discs which saw huge returns from retailers of old vinyl albums.

While he builds up his artists' roster and looks for prospective superstars, Mr

Wright must do his best to discourage any costly defections. The whole Chrysalis saga, by highlighting how dependent record companies are on the unreliable success of artists, underlines their unsuitability as quoted investments — as former investors in Virgin will testify.

Normal investment criteria hardly apply to Chrysalis. A pre-tax profit figure of £3.5 million this year, the top of the range, puts the shares on a p/e multiple of more than 15. Net assets per share of 185p and £12 million in the bank sent the shares up 1p to 146p yesterday. Mr David Gefkin, the producer, has 10 per cent, but Mr Wright and his colleagues have control. Still highly speculative.

Newman Tonks

Newman Tonks spent more than £50 million on acquisitions last year — a lot for a company capitalised at only £150 million. Mr Doug Rogers, Newman's chief executive, does not see the burden of paying for these key strategic moves in quite that way, however. He believes the company was let off lightly given that group sales will double following the purchases.

The acquisitions accounted for slightly more than half the



Risk-taker: Chris Wright, who plans to enter television

growth in profits, which rose by 26 per cent to £21.2 million, in the year to October. Indeed, internally generated growth was roughly the same as the increase in earnings per share, which were 13 per cent ahead at 17.9p.

After adding Falcon Lock to its US operations and buying Normbau in Germany, about half the expected £250 million sales in the current year will arise overseas. In Britain,

Newman believes it has broken the mould of the hardware industry by picking up five architectural ironmongers, including the quoted Laidlaw Thomson, giving the company a better command of architectural sales for projects like major office developments, airports and hospitals. Admittedly, gearing has risen from negligible levels to 45 per cent as a result. However, half the borrowings

have been raised in Germany and the US at low interest rates and the entire £26 million debt could probably be removed by the disposal of peripheral businesses.

There is also the question why the vendors of the companies Newman acquired were so keen to sell — Mr Rogers admits that 1990 will be a tough year. Analysts think profits are still likely to reach £26 million this time, for earnings of 19p. That means a prospective p/e ratio of less than 10 with the shares at 188p, which is not high, given the bargain-bunting predators roaming the building materials sector.

Rustenburg

Platinum as a metal has long been more expensive than gold. By contrast, platinum shares have long been cheaper than their golden rivals.

So, if investors feel they missed the South African gold boom, which was pushed out yesterday on the back of the "Mandela" factor and which was further aided by Wall Street and dollar wobbles, it is not too late to catch the SA platinum boat.

Rustenburg Platinum Holdings, South Africa's largest platinum group metals (pgm) producer, reported interim pre-tax profits of R643.5 million (£153.2 million) for the six months ended December,

compared with R633 million, and raised its interim dividend from 115 to 125 cents a share.

Rustenburg's immediate earnings outlook is clouded by rand/dollar exchange rate movements — which will be governed by international political factors — and, in turn, by platinum and nickel prices.

The upshot, as Rustenburg itself implies, is that by the year-end the group may be lucky just to report fairly flat distributable earnings — so not much change on last year's 475 cents a share can be expected. However, Rustenburg has substantial cash reserves, the medium-term outlook for supply/demand in the pgm market is still running in its favour and there is no reason why the final dividend should not go up.

At a London price of £15, Rustenburg offers a prospective price/earnings ratio of 12.1, backed by a gross yield of 5.4 per cent. The average yield on established and big SA gold shares — whose dividend growth prospects are far from certain — is about 5 per cent. As the recent Lomho/Impala development demonstrates, SA platinum fields are where overseas investors want to be.

And, if the investment climate towards SA continues to improve, the good and the great in the SA market will be in demand. Rustenburg will be among them. Buy.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Interim losses at BBA double to £82,000

The vagaries of the bloodstock sales season has hit the USM-quoted British Bloodstock Agency. With the Newmarket Highflyer yearling sale moved from September to October, the company's commission on £5.2 million of sales shifts to the second half.

That, however, did nothing to help figures for the first half. In the six months to September the pre-tax loss was £82,000, double the year before. With the exception of 1985, when profits hit a peak of £1.6 million, BBA has been sliding since it came to the USM in 1984. The interim dividend is held at 2.5p.

Bond acts to reinforce ban

Bond Brewing Holdings yesterday filed a new action in the Supreme Court of Western Australia seeking a permanent injunction prohibiting banks led by the National Australia Bank and a group of Bond creditors based in the United States from winding up the company. The court has already granted a restraining injunction against the creditors.

Construction orders dip

Construction orders fell to £1.55 billion in November from £1.69 billion in October and £1.90 billion in November, 1988. In the three months to November, orders were 5 per cent up on the previous quarter but 4 per cent down on 1988. In private housing, orders in the quarter were 6 per cent lower than the previous quarter and 36 per cent down on 1988.

Crystalate in £6m sale

Crystalate Holdings, the electronics manufacturer, is selling its telecommunications division, principally comprising A P Besson, to Hosiden Electronics, a Japanese electronics company, for up to £6 million.

An initial payment of £5 million will be made at completion, with a further £600,000 expected in May, on the basis of projected net assets at completion. Under a separate agreement, relating to consignment stock in the telecommunications division, Crystalate may receive up to a further £400,000 from Hosiden. The telecommunications division, which makes telephone capsules and related products, made pre-tax losses of £973,000 in the year to end-September 1988, and £255,000 in the seven months to end-April 1989.

Logitek rises 8% to £1.4m

Logitek, the Manchester microcomputer firm, lifted pre-tax profits 8.6 per cent to £1.4 million for the half-year to September. Sales rose by £5.7 million to £18.7 million, helped by a first time contribution from the Advansys specialist software business. The interim will be 1.3p (1.2p) on earnings per share of 6.69p, down from 7.07p.

Beales marks time at £1m

Difficult trading in textiles held pre-tax profits growth at J Beales to £18,000, up to £1.03 million, in the six months to November, on 13.5 per cent higher turnover of £17.4 million. The textiles outlook is unhelpful; Beales is more optimistic about refrigeration. The interim rises to 2.05p (1.85p) on 12.9p earnings per share (13.7p).

Wentworth doubles

Despite a quadrupled interest charge the USM-quoted packaging company Wentworth International, in the six months to last September, made pre-tax profits of £285,000, a 104 per cent increase on the equivalent period the year before. The interim dividend goes up by just 7 per cent to 1.93p.

Mr Haque Khan, chairman, said the 138 per cent jump in operating profits was only achieved through the use of additional working capital — hence the higher interest charge. Next month, the group — which Mr Khan says remains acquisitive — expects to complete its £2 million purchase of Dowland Press, its first move into specialist printing. The takeover includes a first-time full contribution from Edwards bought for £1.6 million in December 1988.

Camford profit up 36% to £5.83m

By Jeremy Andrews

A 45 per cent growth in sales to £125 million at Camford Engineering in the year to October was due to the company's success in picking up new business as well as the rise in car output, according to Mr John Gutteridge, the finance director.

Camford's purchase of a former Austin Rover factory in Llanelli, which enlarged its workforce by a third, also helped. Camford presses and machines metal components for the car industry.

Pre-tax profits increased by 36 per cent to £5.83 million, leaving earnings per share 31 per cent ahead at 18.8p. The final dividend rises by a

quarter to 5p, leaving the total 26 per cent high at 6.3p.

Markheath Securities, Australian Mr John Spalvins' British property and investment vehicle, which raised £45 million in a rights issue this month, holds a 29.9 per cent stake.

Markheath has often contacted Camford for discussions of a general nature, Mr Gutteridge said.

Camford said a surplus site in Stevenage could be worth up to £30 million. However, planning permission has not yet been obtained.

Camford's other sites at Bedford, Bourne and Luton are still required.

Unit trusts at record £58.1bn

By Lindsay Cook
Family Money Editor

The total value of unit trust funds under management rose by £2.7 billion to a record £58.1 billion in December.

This reflected the increase in the value of shares held by unit trusts and a net inflow of £50.2 million — the highest level for two years. Sales, at £948 million, were £12 million below the November figure, but the number of units cashed in was the lowest since December 1988.

Mr Tony Smith, chief executive of the Unit Trust Association, said: "1989 saw by far and away the largest ever year-on-year increase in total funds under management. Over the course of the year, value of funds managed by the industry rose by a total of £16.5 billion, or 39.9 per cent. This increase was more than £4.7 billion higher than the previous largest annual rise recorded during 1986."

Sales rose 38.2 per cent to £10.6 billion on the year.

Shipyard plan spurs jobs hope

By Derek Harris
Industrial Editor

British Shipbuilders is near to a deal with MM Oil, based in Co Durham, which would revive Sunderland's Pallion shipyard, one of those shut in the closure of North East Shipbuilders (NESL). The plan is to use it for building rigs and pontoons for oil-related facilities.

It is raising hopes that job losses from the NESL closure will be wiped out, because there are also talks for an Anglo-Greek consortium of Transman Shipping and Charterwell Maritime to re-start ship repair work at North Sands, another British Shipbuilders yard on the Wear.

Another former NESL yard, at Southwick, is to become an enterprise zone.

Mr Christopher Campbell, chairman of British Shipbuilders, said: "Of the 2,100 jobs that went at three yards, 1,200 have already been replaced. I hope now we shall be able to wipe out the backlog."

Making a will

Up to two-thirds of British people die without making a will, which can be costly for relatives they leave behind. Details of one family who lost an £80,000 house are included in seven pages of Family Money on Saturday.

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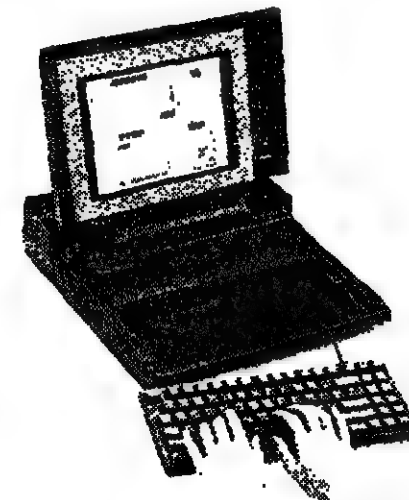
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ADDRESS

When recognition is critical, it's black and white.

Music scores are in black and white because recognition is easy and instantaneous. So for eminent readability, text and graphics appear in clear black and white on Hitachi's HL500 portable computer's screen. That's because Hitachi's double-layer type black and white STN LCDs with CFL* backlighting create a beautifully pure black and white screen with impeccable contrast. The difference is dramatic. And gratifying to the eye.

Such innovation is one result of Hitachi's advanced micron-level technology and incorporated in the HL500. It assures exceptional clarity for text and complex graphics and fully supports VGA software. Hitachi computers feature state-of-the-art LSIs and VLSIs made by Hitachi.



Whatever the product, from laptops to super computers, from home appliances to Factory Automation systems, Hitachi has the same philosophy. This philosophy goes beyond incorporating over 40,000 patented technologies. With the vast scope of its expertise, Hitachi can design each feature, major and minor, with every other feature in mind. The result is in-depth integration, guaranteeing the special quality which is the hallmark of Hitachi.

* STN = Super-Twisted Nematic;
CFL = Cold Cathode Fluorescent Lamp

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Gestetner sets its sights on growth as profits top £36m

By Melinda Wintzack

Gestetner, the photocopier and fax supplier which last summer moved into the photographic business with a £71 million acquisition of the Australian Hanimer Corporation, is planning two more major acquisitions in the office supplies distribution area.

The old family business, which was put firmly on the road to recovery three years ago when Mr Basil Sellers, the Australian textiles chief, took over as chairman and chief executive, also said it plans an invasion of Eastern Europe through joint ventures and distribution deals.

Pre-tax profits have risen by 26 per cent to £36.2 million for the year to end-October.

Mr Sellers said it was the first time since 1985 that the Australian investment vehicle, bought a controlling interest in late 1985 that Gestetner's profit growth has been based on growing sales, up 36 per cent this past financial year.

Profit growth following the AFP takeover had been based on cost-cutting.

Margins have grown from 2 per cent to about 8 per cent during the past three years, and earnings per share have grown by a compound 66 per cent.

Gestetner's earnings per share in the year to end-October climbed by 14 per cent to 31p. The total dividend is increased by 36 per cent from 5.5p to 7.5p.

Mr Sellers said a three-month contribution from Hanimer, the photographic and imaging equipment supplier, best known for its Vivitar and Hanimer cameras, contributed £7 million in profits and 14 per cent of the growth in turnover.

Another 14 per cent sales growth came from increased productivity from the group's sales force.

He said Gestetner's new Copy Printer, a normal photocopier which uses the less expensive stencil process, now accounts for 10 per cent of sales.

But Gestetner ran into problems in America, where stiff competition in the supply of fax machines in the second half has forced it to consider whether to withdraw completely from the fax market in America.

When considering acquisitions, Gestetner is placing a high priority on continental Europe, which now accounts for two-thirds of its office equipment revenue.

Although its source is primarily Japan, it will now look to Eastern Europe for lower-tech labour work.

Gestetner, whose own office equipment products now account for less than 12 per cent of its distribution business, says it is looking at several possible acquisitions to build up its distribution network.

This is in order to give it pole position to handle a growing array of products coming on the market.

As well as optical filing systems, colour copiers and laser printers, there are integrated fax, laser printer and digital copier machines which are new to the scene.



Growth by sales for first time: Basil Sellers, chairman and chief executive of Gestetner

Swiss take second sip at water

By Graham Searjeant

Unsanctioned demand for water shares among Swiss investors at the privatization has prompted Swiss Bank Corporation to lead management a private issue of warrants to buy the package of 1,000 shares in the 10 water companies. The weighted package was originally sold to institutional and foreign investors.

The 100,000 warrants, issued through SBC's London market-making business, will enable holders to buy up to 10,000 of the packages, equivalent to 10 million shares in the water companies, weighted for their size.

SBC has issued the warrants at £44.50, but each warrant entitles the holder to buy only a tenth of a package. It can be exercised at any time from March 7 this year until June 26, 1991, at an initial price for the package of £1,625, equivalent to yesterday's middle market price.

The exercise price rises to £2,325 a package after July, 1990, the equivalent price after payment of the second instalment on water shares.

SBC calculates the premium for the warrant is 18.1 per cent on the price after the second instalment. Investors speculating on the price of water shares over shorter periods could buy London traded options cheaper. The warrant value is geared to the price of the water package in a ratio of about six to one.

Brussels seeks air route control

From Peter Gullford, Brussels

The European Commission yesterday launched an ambitious attempt to usurp the roles of the 12 European Community governments as chief broker of new air traffic rights on routes between European cities and destinations outside EC countries by 1993.

If given approval by national ministers, Brussels intends to use its new powers to win reciprocal access for EC airlines in domestic markets in non-EC countries.

In addition, the commission will ask EC countries' ministers for a remit to begin talks to establish a global deal with the six nations of the European Free Trade Association, through which the EC's competition and other rules would apply to their carriers.

Unveiling the proposals in Brussels yesterday, Mr Karel Van Miert, EC Transport Commissioner, said that EC would then have to consider the EC when negotiating its own air traffic deals with countries outside Europe. This would "restrict their room for manoeuvre".

Mr Van Miert said that he was confident that Eastern European countries might one day seek a similar agreement with Brussels. He said that all bargaining with non-EC governments to gain access to their domestic air routes—the so-called "fifth freedom"—would be done fairly. "We

want to do it with an open mind, and not in the spirit of Fortress Europe," he said.

But the commission would push for "comparative treatment" to that enjoyed in the EC by non-EC carriers.

US airlines, he said, flew 18 routes in the EC, but European airlines were barred from flights between US cities.

The initial thrust of the commission's move will be to take gradual control of negotiations on air traffic rights to non-EC destinations, a task currently carried out bilaterally by the 12 EC governments, in conformity with the Chicago Convention.

EC officials expect the initiative to provoke anger in the national capitals, and have promised a long transitional stage, during which Brussels would merely watch over government officials to check that EC law—notably on competition—was respected.

Any agreement on traffic between London and New York, for example, would be scrutinized by Brussels to ensure that smaller airlines were not elbowed out by big carriers. Mr Van Miert is adamant, however, that air traffic negotiations, particularly over "fifth freedom" rights, should ultimately fall within the competence of Brussels. When bilateral air deals are out, the commission would renegotiate them.

SRO fees reduced after overpayment

By Lindsay Cook, Family Money Editor

The Securities and Investment Board announced that fees for the self-regulatory organizations (SROs) will be reduced by an average of 5 per cent in 1990-91, whilst recognized professional bodies, such as the Law Society, face an average increase of 18 per cent.

The board's budgeted costs have increased by 17 per cent to £15.6 million. But the reduction comes because the Securities Association and the

Investment Management Regulatory Organisation have overpaid this year. In addition, the SIB will be paying back a lower sum to the Bank of England.

TSA will pay £2.2 million (£2.3 million in 1989-90), the Life Assurance and Unit Trust Regulatory Organisation £2.3 million (£2.8 million) and the Financial Intermediaries, Managers and Brokers Regulatory Association £2 million (£1.65 million);

Shell Oil advances to £843m earnings

By Our City Staff

Shell Oil profits rose 25 per cent to £264 million (£159 million) on revenues of \$5.50 billion in the fourth quarter.

This boosted full-year earnings 13 per cent to \$1.40 billion (£843.37 million) from \$1.23 billion, while revenues increased to \$21.95 billion from \$21.40 billion last time.

The fourth-quarter results compare with profits of \$212 million on revenues of \$5.46 billion in the previous final quarter. Shell cited higher

crude oil prices for the improvement.

According to the group, the higher crude prices "benefited oil and gas exploration and production earnings, but resulted in a margin squeeze in the latter half of the year in our downstream businesses".

A spokesman for Shell added: "Even so, chemical products earnings for 1989 were a record and oil products net income was second only to last year's record."

Bonnyman lured by CDC pipes

A black cloud of depression has, I hear, descended upon the leveraged buyout department at Bankers Trust, already demoralized after criticism of the Magnet buyout which it handled. Sources close to the firm report that some bonus payments distributed there have been somewhat disappointing as a result. But this latest bout of blues has apparently been caused by the resignation, on Friday, of Gordon Bonnyman, a popular and affable figure. He is moving to Charterhouse Development Capital as its managing director, where, after CDC's forays with MPI and Lowndes, his cheery personality will be most welcome. Bonnyman's vacancy will be filled by Dalton Dwyer, who was previously head of syndication. Completing the game of musical chairs, Norreen Doyle, an American, will be moving from the Bankers Trust in the United States to London to run syndication. "Charterhouse is Scottish-owned and I'm Scottish," says Glasgow-born Bonnyman, who has been with Bankers Trust for more than 19 years. "It is also one of the pre-eminent institutions in this country in this business." He hopes to step up CDC's activity in medium and large transactions. "As Bankers Trust we have handled a lot of bigger, often syndicated buyout business, and I certainly hope Charterhouse will reassert itself in that area," he said.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Major hurdle cleared

The date of John Major's first Budget, March 20, has already had champagne corks popping in racing circles—for the first time in years, it will not ruin the Cheltenham Festival for City followers of the sport of kings. Colonel Phipps, a columnist in *Sporting Life* and *Weekender*, had long been campaigning for Nigel Lawson to refrain from selecting the second Tuesday in March—Champion Hurdle day at

Cheltenham—as the date to deliver his speech. So too had fellow journalist Christopher Ffrench in his column in the *Spectator*. Colonel Phipps had in fact pin-pointed March 20 as the most agreeable date for the Budget, since it clashed only with Foxwell and Nottingham. "It's the most important policy initiative that we have had from the new Chancellor so far," he declared yesterday.

Mining move

Johnny Heathcote, son of former James Capel chairman Keith Heathcote, resigned from Warburg Securities on Tuesday after three years with the firm, and will be joining Laing & Cruickshank before the end of February.

Heathcote junior, aged 35, was the divisional director at Warburg responsible for the mining department. "My responsibilities incorporated sales, research and market-making," he said. At L&C, he will, similarly, lead the international mining team. "Mining is a very powerful department for us," says Russell Leiman, the chief executive. "Laing & Cruickshank kept on dealing in the financial market when most other firms in the City stopped—we have built up a very loyal following."

● Gifts trader Andrew Woodcock, at Alexander's Discount, thinks Life market-maker John Blades-Williamson, summed up recent falls on the gilt-edged market most succinctly. After hearing prices were off once more, Williamson said: "It's like trying to catch a falling piano."

SE splash for Lake

Some people are born great, some have greatness thrust upon them and others, it seems, thrust it upon themselves. Even if they do so inadvertently. Richard Lake, that well-known charist who once worked for Savory Millin and these days runs his own business—World Stockmarket Analysis, which publishes five circulars a fortnight—states on his business card, immediately under his name, that he is "Chairman & Member of the International Stock Exchange." Stressing that "never in a million years" would he actually want to be chairman of the Stock Exchange, a somewhat embarrassed Lake is at pains to point out that "it was all a terrible printing mistake. I spotted it myself straight away, and now the ampersand has been blocked out—I thought all the rogue cards had been thrown out." Meanwhile, Lake says that he is enjoying his move away from the Square Mile—and tells me that the business is already profitable. A committed Christian, he also reveals that he gives 7 per cent of his revenue to the Mayblossom Christian Trust, which he and his wife have set up, with the intention of, in due course, funding a Christian book shop and an old people's home. Presumably, all former chairmen of the Stock Exchange will be welcome.

● Sign seen on the back of an old and slow-moving car on the M4 yesterday: "Please overtake—heavy mortgage."

Carol Leonard

Specialeyes £689,000 in the red

By Philip Pangalos

The severe downturn in the optical market since the withdrawal of the Government sight-test subsidy has led to trading losses at Specialeyes, the Unlisted Securities Market retail chain.

The company slipped into the red with a pre-tax loss of £689,000 in the six months to November 10, compared with profits of £337,000 last time.

Group sales increased by 35 per cent to £6.53 million, from an average of 67 outlets compared with 38. The interim dividend has been axed, against 0.5p last time, and there is a 4.74p loss per share, against 1.61p of earnings.

Mr Andrew Noble, the chairman, said the company had experienced a drop in sales of about 27 per cent, compared with 36 per cent for the remainder of the industry, suggesting a less severe downturn for Specialeyes.

Trade is expected to revive this year as the impact of the Government action wears off. Reorganization costs at the Dutch subsidiary also contributed to losses.

Specialeyes, which has 75 branches with outlets in some British Home Stores shops, is Britain's third largest optical retailer.

Mr Noble said there are no immediate plans for further expansion although there are plans to launch a promotion next month to include free sight tests at certain stores.

COMMENT David Brewerton

Topsy-turvy world of the global stock market

The global stock market may be here to stay but it increasingly appears to be a wonky coil rather than a smooth circle. It makes no sense in terms of the time clock for London to follow Wall Street rather than Tokyo, since this often leads to a reversal of direction in mid-afternoon. The relation between the American and Japanese markets has become equally confusing as more weight has been placed on it by dealers.

Yesterday was the third session in a row when early predictions were defied and it was hard to say who was following who—or what.

in New York. Admittedly, Tokyo's reaction should be taken in context with a 540-point recovery on the previous two days. Japan is also particularly nervous before the general election.

Even so, there are signs of short-term decoupling between London and Wall Street. This is due to the more substantial interest rate decoupling. British short-term interest rates depend far more on what the Bundesbank does in Frankfurt and on the sterling/mark exchange rate—as well as domestic inflation and spending—than on what Alan Greenspan does in Washington.

This tends to confuse the signals when each of the main share markets is being closely governed by the relationship between its own equity and bond yields. This ratio has become an occasional obsession ever since the widening reverse yield gap was mistakenly ignored in the summer of 1987.

In Britain, we know how short-term interest rates are here to stay and there is no reason why Britain's higher gilt-edged yields should be influenced by American auctions of bonds or, next week, Treasury bills. The Japanese financial system, which supplies so much of this money for the United States, is, however, likely to remain super-sensitive, at least until the election is over.

Tokyo started what promised to be a rocky day by falling almost 600 points on the Nikkei index. This was in response to an auction in the United States of \$5 billion 40 year bonds in Refcorp—the agency set up to rescue savings and loan institutions—which dragged the yield up another notch to 8.6 per cent. Details came too late to affect Wall Street on Tuesday, but thrust Japanese dealers into the camp that expects the Federal Reserve to halt or reverse the decline in US short-term rates, with consequences for the yen, Japanese bond yields and share prices.

British investors had other ideas, however, converting a 40 point drop in the FT-SE index to less than 13 points by the close, despite a moderate initial drop

Time to treat insiders civilly

Procedures for bringing insiders to book are hopelessly inadequate. Evidence is collected by one body, normally the Stock Exchange, and handed on to the Department of Trade and Industry for prosecution. It does not result in successful prosecutions, and every time a case collapses the fear of being convicted recedes from the front of each insider dealer's mind.

Investments Board bringing the actions. It works there, as Ivan Boesky would unhappily testify. But our criminal law is not working here.

Tyrie's £1m try-on

For well over a month, shareholders in Norfolk Capital Group, a company owning and operating a series of hotels and clubs, have been bombarded with conflicting advice. A hotlied of some repute, Peter Tyrie, is attempting to remove the existing chief executive, Peter Eyles, and have himself installed in his place. Tyrie's claim to the seat is that he and some associates have picked up a 13 per cent stake and they would run Norfolk better, through their management company, Balmoral, than the existing management. There is little evidence to support the claim, but it is clear that Balmoral would make a great deal of money in management fees if the deal was approved.

The waters of the dispute are muddied by family ties and it is entirely possible that Tyrie might do better than Eyles. That, however, is not the only point at issue. Shareholders should consider whether it is right that those who wish to wrest control for themselves should be allowed to do so without the formality of making an offer for the company.

Overall, there is nowhere near enough reason for shareholders to desert their board in favour of the Balmoral proposals. Tyrie's try-on has cost shareholders the best part of £1 million already. He should be thanked for his interest at Monday's meeting but shown the door.



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— John Redwood, Corporate Affairs Minister

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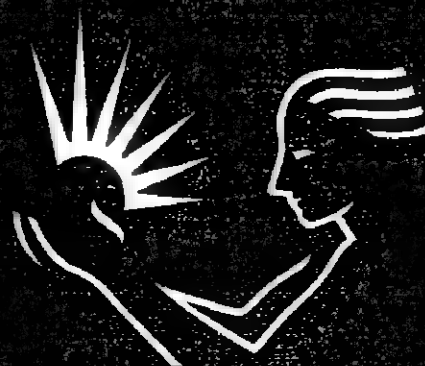
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11	Shaw	Drugs, Stores
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13	Proving	Building Roads
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15	AAH	Electronics A-D
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18	Harland	Electronics E-K
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20	ITL	Electronics
21	Wesley	Electronics S-Z
22	Metals	Building Roads
23	Colony	Building Roads
24	Evros	Chemicals, Plastics
25	Leas (John J)	Foods
26	Enamors	Electronics L-R
27	Whence	Electronics S-Z
28	Quinton	Electronics
29	Harland	Electronics E-K
30	Harland	Electronics E-K
31	Leas Prop	Property
32	Leas (Ben) Coats	Building Roads
33	Broder	Property
34	GEC (as)	Electronics
35	Leas & Metro	Property
36	Saga	Leisure
37	Bilco (F)	Property
38	Holmes Protection	Electronics E-K
39	Bugbridge	Building Roads
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...

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...

FOODS

Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

CHEMICALS, PLASTICS

Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

DRAPERY, STORES

Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

HOTELS, CATERERS

Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

INDUSTRIALS A-D

Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

ELECTRICALS

Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES Big mark-downs

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began January 15. Dealings end tomorrow. Settlement day January 29. Settlement day February 5. Forward bargains are permitted on two previous business days.

Prices recorded are at market close. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Where one price is quoted, it is a middle price. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices. (as) denotes Alpha Stocks. (VOLUMES: PAGE 27).

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1989/90 High	1989/90 Low	Company	Price	Div	Yield	1989/90 High	1989/90 Low	Company	Price	Div	Yield
...

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES

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STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES

1989/90 High	1989/90 Low	Company	Price	Div	Yield	1989/90 High	1989/90 Low	Company	Price	Div	Yield
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STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES

1989/90 High	1989/90 Low	Company	Price	Div	Yield	1989/90 High	1989/90 Low	Company	Price	Div	Yield
...

INSURANCE

Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

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Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

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Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

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Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

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Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

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Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

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Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
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Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

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Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

DRAPERY, STORES

Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

HOTELS, CATERERS

Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

INDUSTRIALS A-D

Company	High	Low	Share	Price	Div	Yield
...

Chancery Division

Land use restriction overtaken by later deal

Building hotel service yard is laying out of road

Attorney General (Ex re Scott) v Barratt Manchester Ltd and Another

Before Mr Justice Scott [Judgment January 19]

An agreement between a landowner and a local authority under section 34 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1932, restricting the future development of the land, did not necessarily lapse if no scheme pursuant to it was ever approved by the minister; (ii) might be abrogated by a subsequent agreement between the parties' successors in title; and (iii) did not give rise to a public right as entitled the Attorney General to enforce it in a relation action.

Mr Justice Scott, Vice-Chancellor of the County Palatine of Lancaster, so held in dismissing an action by the Attorney General at the relation of Mrs Sylvia Scotland, an inhabitant of the district of Turton, against Barratt Manchester Ltd and Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council, which claimed, under a declaration made on July 12, 1934 between Arthur Henwayne Ashworth and Bolton's statutory predecessors, Turton Urban District Council was valid and subsisting and binding on the defendants, and that an injunction restraining Barratt from acting in breach of that agreement by building upon any of some 70 acres of land known as Birtenshaw Farm.

Mr Leolin Price, QC and Mr Robert Sterling for the plaintiff; Mr Anthony Hoggett, QC and Mr P. W. Smith for Barratt; Miss Elizabeth Appleby, QC and Mr John Steel for Bolton.

MR JUSTICE SCOTT said that in 1934, when Mr Ashworth owned the property, he entered into an agreement with Bolton Urban District Council, which was then a local authority, that it and its user should be "permanently restricted so as to preserve the land as and for a private open space".

In 1985 Barratt had obtained planning permission for the erection of 475 houses on 35 acres of the property. Bolton declined to take action to enforce the 1934 agreement and the local residents, one of whom was Mrs Sylvia Scotland, were highly indignant about both

Barratt's proposals and Bolton's attitude.

There were four issues: 1 Was the 1934 agreement enforceable? 2 Had an agreement entered into by Barratt and Bolton on December 13, 1988 discharged, by necessary implication, the 1934 agreement? 3 If not, had the Attorney General locus standi, in a relation action, to enforce the 1934 agreement? 4 If so, should injunctive relief be granted restraining Barratt from continuing with the development?

Mr Ashworth in 1934 had been unwilling that his land should be subjected permanently to reservation as a private open space but he wanted to ensure that its use for agricultural purposes should not be impaired.

Hence his insistence, by clause 4 of the 1934 agreement, that any scheme prepared by the planning committee under the 1932 Act should preserve the existing buildings, prevent the erection of new non-agricultural buildings, prevent the making of new roads and impose no restriction of the user of the property for agricultural purposes or any other purposes which would preserve it as a private open space.

In such event, Mr Ashworth became entitled, under clause 7 of the agreement, to revoke it. On August 13, 1934 the restrictions in the agreement were duly registered as a Class D(ii) land charge under the Land Charges Act 1925.

In February 1937 the regional planning committee had resolved to adopt a draft scheme which in effect embodied the clause 4 conditions. On June 22, 1938 the committee resolved to submit the scheme to the minister, but before any public inquiry could be held the war years brought new legislation, including the repeal of the 1932 Act, by that of 1947, which transferred the functions of regional planning committees to other local authorities, and the scheme which had gone to the minister in 1938 became a dead letter.

In 1959 (by which time Mr Ashworth had died), 1972, 1979 and 1980 applications for planning permission to develop the property were made and refused.

Finally, in March 1984, Barratt made an application to build 475 houses on 35 acres of the property, and successfully appealed to the minister against a refusal by Bolton, whose appeal against the minister's decision, under section 245 of the Town and Country Planning

Act 1971, was dismissed by Mr Justice Kennedy in April 1987.

Since that development would infringe the restrictions contained in the 1934 agreement which had been registered in the Land Charges Registry, Barratt accordingly applied to the minister, under section 88 of Schedule 24 to the 1971 Act, for the discharge of those acres from those restrictions.

Bolton objected on the same grounds they had used in resisting the application for outline planning permission and the minister (whose mind had apparently changed) upheld their objection for planning reasons.

Barratt then tried to persuade the minister and Bolton that the restrictions were no longer legally enforceable, while pursuing with Bolton negotiations as to the matters reserved for agreement before development could actually begin.

The latter eventually succeeded, Barratt agreeing, *inter alia*, to reduce the number of houses to 277, and to convey to Bolton certain specified areas as "public open spaces".

All that was incorporated in an agreement under seal dated December 13, 1988 executed by Bolton, Barratt, and the current owners of the property, and expressed to be made pursuant to section 52 of the 1971 Act, the "grandchild" of section 34 of the 1932 Act.

Shortly afterwards, Barratt bought the 35 acres for £1,056,000. The collapse of Bolton's opposition to the development led the local residents to take up the cudgels on their own behalf. They persuaded the Attorney General to lend his name to a relation action and a writ was issued against Barratt and Bolton on August 1, 1989.

Enforceability of 1934 agreement. The first issue affected not only the 35 acres subject to the 1988 agreement, but the rest of the property. Counsel for Barratt had submitted that since the scheme had ever come into effect the 1934 agreement had lapsed.

His Lordship could not accept that. Turton had undertaken to prepare a scheme. They had no power to undertake, and had not undertaken, to release the scheme would come into effect. It was impossible to regard the collapse of the draft scheme as a matter of any real concern to Mr Ashworth. His concern was that if a scheme should be brought in, it would preserve to him the benefit of the clause 4 conditions.

Subject to the effect of the 1988 agreement, that of 1934 remained valid and enforceable. Effect of 1988 agreement. It was common ground that

consensual discharge or modification of the 1934 restrictions was possible; the only question was whether such discharge was the necessary implication of the 1988 agreement.

Counsel for the relation had advanced two reasons why it should not be. First, that when the 1988 agreement was being negotiated Bolton were still endeavouring to uphold the 1934 agreement. His Lordship could not accept that reason, which treated the 1988 agreement as no more than the approval of the reserved matters left outstanding when outline permission had been granted.

Its true character was different. It established the details of a development of a different number of houses and provided for open spaces to be conveyed to Bolton, who had been under no obligation to make any agreement with Barratt under section 52 of the 1971 Act.

Having done so, the contractual implications of that agreement had objectively to be ascertained, without any regard to such mental reservations as Bolton might have had. The implication that it replaced, *pro tanto*, the restrictions in the 1934 agreement were inescapable.

Counsel's second point was that the 1988 agreement was expressed to have effect from the implementation in whole or in part of the development. Since such implementation had not begun before the issue of the writ, counsel had protested that the courts ought not to permit a defendant to take a step after the commencement of an action to defeat the plaintiff's rights.

His Lordship found nothing in that point. The only question was whether the development, when begun, represented a breach of restrictions which bound Barratt.

The reliance placed by the defendants on the 1988 agreement was well-founded, it appeared to be a bona fide attempt to sue to enforce the 1934 agreement, his Lordship thought, he should express his opinion on the interesting arguments advanced by counsel.

Although that made it strictly unnecessary to decide whether the Attorney General would have had the right to sue to enforce the 1934 agreement, his Lordship thought, he should express his opinion on the interesting arguments advanced by counsel.

The issue turned on the nature of the release and obligations created by an agreement under section 34 of the 1932 Act. It was clear that the Attorney General had no *locus standi* to restrain an interference with a release, *per se*, right, or prevent a breach of covenant in a conveyance between private parties, even if the covenant was a public authority; see *Attorney General v. Corporation of London* (1938) 1 Ch 233.

It was no doubt true that the benefit of a covenant under section 34 of the 1932 Act (now, section 52 of the 1971 Act) taken for the benefit of the public but there was no "right", properly so-called, that rested in the public or members of the public to use a public highway or a public park.

The only right created by a restrictive covenant was a right of enforcement, that right was by section 84(1) expressly conferred upon the local authority, not upon the public at large; see *Lord Wilberforce in Gourlay v. Union of Post Office Workers* (1978) AC 435, 477.

In addition to actions brought to enforce rights that could be enjoyed by the public at large, relation actions could be brought to enforce a restrictive covenant breach of the criminal law. But actions to enforce restrictions contained in section 34 agreements could not be brought under that head: it was a civil law matter.

The restriction in a section 34 (or section 52) agreement could be enforced by the local authority with whom it was made, or its statutory successor. As counsel for Bolton had expressed power to enforce, or by corollary not to enforce, its restrictions.

It was common ground that it had the power to release the restrictions, by agreement with the landowner, to vary them.

The local authority's decision to exercise, or not to exercise, any of those powers was not subject to judicial review, and to that extent, subject to control by the court.

Further, an action to enforce restrictions contained in a section 34 (or 52) agreement, not being one brought by a local authority, was not, in his Lordship's opinion, one brought to enforce a public right. It was, on analysis, an action brought to correct an improper exercise (or non-exercise) of power by that local authority.

Accordingly, the present action was not one properly brought by the Attorney General as plaintiff. The action was dismissed.

Solicitors: Lyons Wilson & Co, Manchester; Field, Co, Manchester; Mr John W. G. MacGregor, Bolton.

Hillingdon London Borough Council v Secretary of State for the Environment and Another

Before Mr Justice Macpherson [Judgment January 18]

An planning inspector was not in error when he concluded that the building of a hotel service-yard amounted to "laying out or constructing a road or part of a road" within section 43(2)(d) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

The action of the hotel's builders, Novotel (Jersey) Ltd, in beginning work on the service-yard was not "colourable" so as to preclude reliance on it as an implementation of planning permission.

Mr Justice Macpherson so held in the Queen's Bench Division in rejecting an appeal by Hillingdon London Borough Council against the planning inspector's decision of February 2, 1989 questioning the council's enforcement notice and allowing Novotel (Jersey) Ltd to proceed with the construction of the hotel.

Section 43 of the 1971 Act provides: "(1) development shall be taken to be begun on the earliest date on which any specified operation comprised in the development begins to be carried out."

"(2) In subsection (1) ... 'specified operation' means any of the following, that is to say:— (a) any operation in the course of laying out or constructing a road or part of a road."

Mr Peter Boydell, QC, Mr Charles George and Mr Charles Myrton for the local authority; Mr Guy Sankey for the secretary of state; Mr Lionel Read, QC, for Novotel.

MR JUSTICE MACPHERSON said that in 1982 Novotel were granted outline planning permission to build a 200-bed hotel on a green belt site in West London. Permission was granted by the secretary of state against the council's wishes. The permission was to be implemented by July 19, 1987.

The site was not the finest jewel in the green belt's crown. The focus of the case was on some work done in May 1987 involving the excavation and clearing of 720 square metres of the site as a service yard. The inspector had decided that that work had amounted to the beginning of development.

The council's first ground of appeal was that the inspector had erred in law in deciding that the service area was a road.

The second was based on the inspector's finding that (i) Novotel's interest in carrying out the work to the service area was to keep planning permission alive; and (ii) the council's interest in the service area was to keep planning permission alive.

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mission alive; (ii) the work did not form part of a continuing programme of works and (iii) Novotel were bound by a conditional contract to sell the site at the time.

The second ground was an allegation that the operations were "colourable" in the sense of *Speckman v Secretary of State for the Environment* (1977) 1 All ER 257.

On the first ground, Lord Reid had said in *Brims v Cocks* (1973) AC 854: "The meaning of an ordinary English word is not a question of law. This was not a case where the facts had to be applied to an unusual definition of the word. The word was defined in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* as 'a word of communication'. That was eminently a conclusion of good common sense."

In considering "colourability", each case has to be looked at on its own facts. The test was not simply whether Novotel intended to keep the planning permission alive, but whether they intended to carry on with the development.

The inspector had found as a fact that in 1987, while Novotel were not fully committed to the development, it could never be less than said that development would not go ahead.

Solicitors: Mr F. C. Pile, Liverpool; Messrs Scislow, Nabarro Nathanson.

Appealing refusal of transfer

In re P (Minors)

An appeal against a decision of a judge in the county court refusing to transfer family proceedings to the High Court in accordance with paragraph 2(2) of Practice Direction (Family Division: Business Distribution) (1988) 1 WLR 558 had to be brought before the matter was tried by that judge.

Once he had exercised his discretion to hear the case himself and had gone on to do so, it was too late to bring an appeal.

Lord Justice Butler-Sloss, sitting in the Court of Appeal with Lord Justice Nourse, so stated on January 17 in dismissing a father's appeal from the decision of Judge Hannah in the County Court to allow the mother's application to take their two young children to live permanently out of the jurisdiction in New Zealand.

HER LADYSHIP said that the application, although not unusual, was an extremely and deplorable one, depriving a non-custodial parent of having any effective relationship with his children.

The judge, having been referred to the Practice Direction, refused the father's application to transfer the case to the High Court.

That was the moment at which counsel should have sought leave to appeal and to have the case adjourned. It was too late once the judge, having exercised his discretion, had gone on to try the case.

LORD JUSTICE NOURSE, agreeing, said that the case having been heard and decided by the judge in the county court, the Court of Appeal had no power to order its retrial in the High Court. The Practice Direction did not provide for an appeal against a decision of a judge in the county court.

MR JUSTICE MACPHERSON said that in 1982 Novotel were granted outline planning permission to build a 200-bed hotel on a green belt site in West London. Permission was granted by the secretary of state against the council's wishes. The permission was to be implemented by July 19, 1987.

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Council fulfilled duty

Regina v East Hertfordshire District Council, Ex parte Smith

A local authority fulfilled its statutory duty under section 51(8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 and section 38 of the Land Compensation Act 1973, to rehouse people displaced from residential accommodation by a compulsory purchase order, if it provided temporary bed and breakfast accommodation pending discussion on permanent accommodation.

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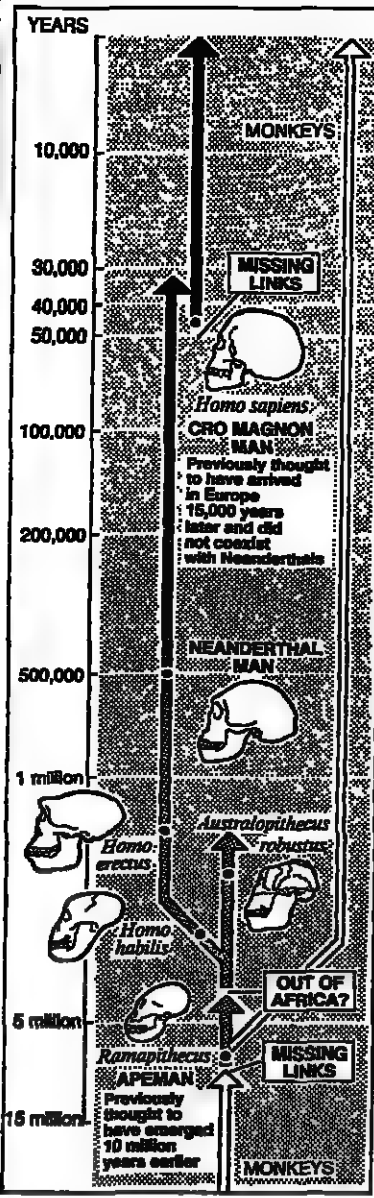
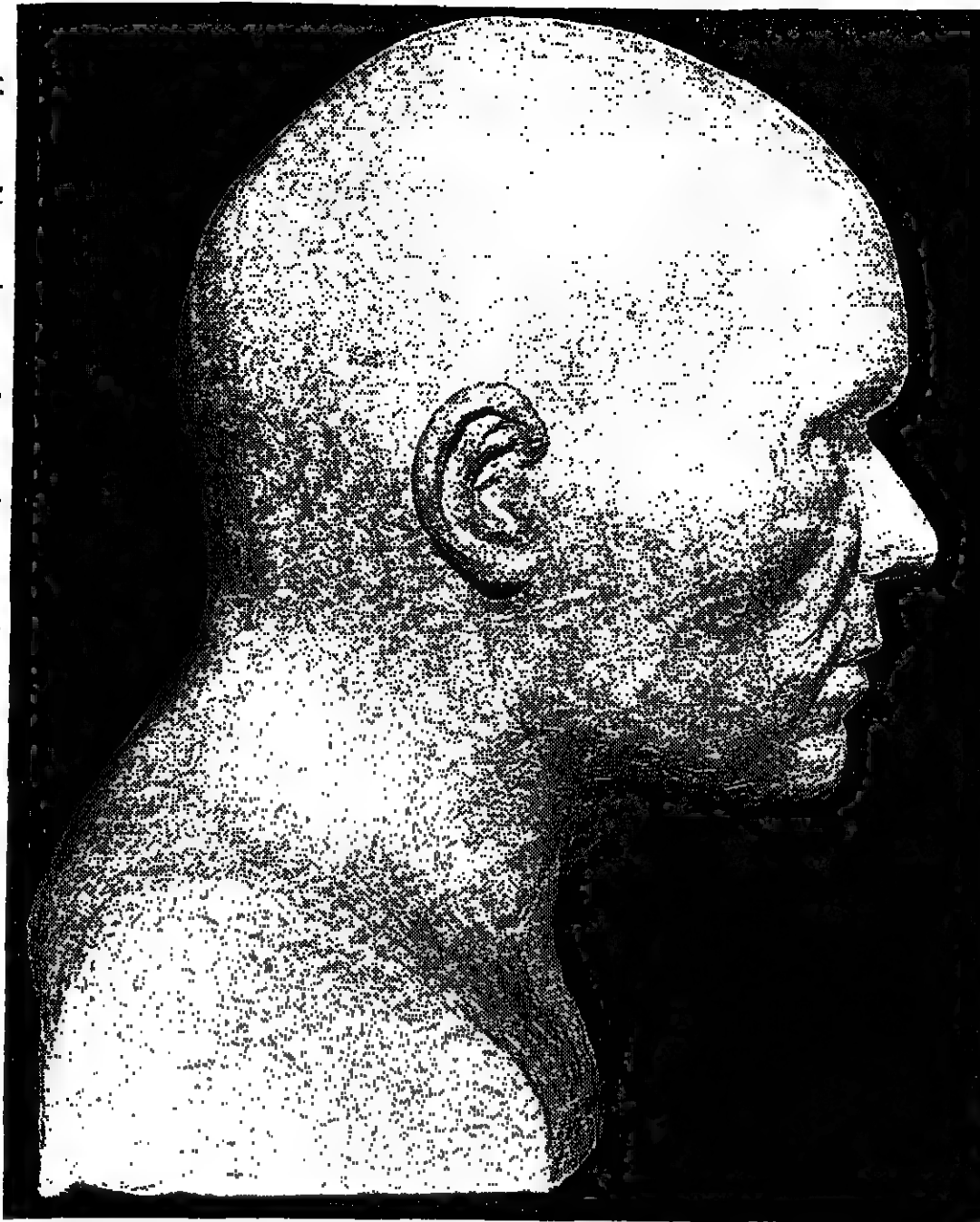
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- SCIENCE: FAUNA IN NEW STUDY
- MEDICINE: NEW AIDS HOPE
- TECHNOLOGY: MOON LAUNCH

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

THURSDAY JANUARY 25 1990



Re-writing history: did Cro-Magnon man, our direct ancestor, (left) co-exist with Neanderthal man (right)?



Disputed origins of the species

Recent research into the origins of man shows that there could be a touch of the Neanderthal in all of us. Recent discoveries in Spain and France challenge the idea that Neanderthals disappeared before Cro-Magnon man, our direct ancestor, arrived in Europe 30,000 to 35,000 years ago.

Evidence showing that the two co-existed for thousands of years is reinforced by dramatic finds, in the Middle East, of the most complete Neanderthal skeletons yet discovered. Dr Christopher Stringer, principal scientist in the department of palaeontology at the Natural History Museum in London, says: "We could have Neanderthal genes." But he believes the genetic influence of any local intermingling was too limited to influence the evolution of modern man.

In the absence of any other explanation to account for their rapid decline, such as genocide or being driven away by Cro-Magnons, Stringer suggests the Neanderthals' 200,000 year uninterrupted reign in Europe ended simply because the Cro-Magnons were "smarter". In the competition for limited food resources and the organization of their communities to cope with the environment, the newcomers were simply more efficient, he suggests.

In fact, Dr Robin Dunbar, of University College, London, and Dr Robert Foley, of Cambridge University, believe the impact of climatic change and other environmental pressures have had an important influence on the evolution of the species and its migration from Africa.

Dunbar says the lessons of how prehistoric man adapted to deteriorating climatic conditions could have future relevance. The early pre-human forms had brains little larger than those of the apes, and they survived on a diet similar to the fruit and leaves that chimpanzees eat. Their successors had a more abrasive diet based on hard nuts and seeds. But it was only about 100,000 years ago that a rapid development in brain size comparable to that of modern man occurred.

New research is calling into question much of what scientists believed about the origins of man. Pearce Wright reports

Dunbar says the explanation for this, and other fundamental biological changes, is more likely to be found in the neglected study of early ecological conditions. While scientists concentrated on the anatomy and cultural development of the Neanderthals, they neglected the possible links with the "mini" Ice Ages.

But from a growing volume of fossil evidence and the latest results of genetic studies, Stringer and Dr Peter Andrews have refined the so-called "Noah's Ark" theory. They speculate that all modern humans originated from one place, so far unknown, in Africa about 150,000 to 200,000 years ago and spread out to replace the Neanderthals.

But the difference between Neanderthals and later modern people is not as great as scientists once thought. Stringer's group has conducted some of the key work showing that Neanderthals were not the shambling, ape-like, feeble-brained creatures pictured by cartoonists, but walked as upright as we do. They were certainly very muscular and strongly built, but in body shape they were similar to people who live in cold climates today, such as the Lapps and Eskimos.

Europe has provided a key area for investigating the development of modern humans because of the stability of the sediments in which fossils have been preserved and which can be reliably dated.

Yet skeletons of Neanderthals were mostly incomplete until recent discoveries by Dr Yoel Rak and his colleagues at Tel Aviv University, who have examined fossils from the Kebara cave, in Israel. Stringer, who recently returned from a visit to Kebara, says this exciting evidence shows that Neanderthals and modern humans co-existed in that region for about 60,000 years.

But, in resolving a long-standing mystery, some of the latest findings from Kebara reject the notion of a direct ancestor-descendant relationship between the two forms of human.

In earlier reconstructions from incomplete skeletons, archaeologists had been misled into believing the Neanderthals had a uniquely shaped pubic bone in front of the pelvis, giving them exceptionally wide hips with, in females, an enlarged birth canal. But examination of a virtually complete pelvis from Kebara revealed that it was simply a different shape from humans, not bigger at all.

Other evidence from the Israeli site indicates that Neanderthals contributed little to the evolution of modern man. The anatomy of the two groups remained distinct.

Nevertheless, the latest revelation from two Spanish caves indicates that Neanderthals were superseded by modern-looking humans.

Research by teams working with Dr James Bischoff, of the US Geological Survey, and Dr Victoria Cabrera Valdes, from the Department of Prehistory and Archaeology, in Madrid, at two well-known caves occupied by Neanderthals and, later, Cro-Magnons, produced new dates for the transition.

By employing the new analytical technique of accelerator mass spectrometry, which is much more accurate than conventional carbon-dating, they decided modern man was around the site some 40,000 to 45,000 years ago. That date places Cro-Magnon man in Europe 5,000 to 10,000 years

earlier than had been believed. The newcomers migrated to Europe and Asia via the Middle East, according to the Noah's Ark view.

The details of the Spanish investigation, reported by Bischoff in the *Journal of Archaeological Science*, include illustrations of two sets of tools made by both of the early occupants. To the expert eye, the different artefacts, one set made from quartz by Neanderthals and the other of finely shaped flint by Cro-Magnons, represent distinctive, separate technologies.

Comparison of the two Spanish sites, 350 miles apart, show remarkable consistency, although the periods of occupation differ.

As yet, no clues have been found as to what happened to the Neanderthals; whether they were driven away, killed or had moved before the immigrants arrived.

The established view of human lineage is that it consists of a succession of three species: the first is *Homo habilis*, which evolved in Africa about two million years ago and never strayed outside the continent. *Homo erectus* came next, appearing in Africa about 1.6 million years ago; some populations had migrated by about 1 million years ago. Relatively recently, *Homo sapiens* emerged in two stages. Half a million years ago, *archaic Homo sapiens* appeared, to which the Neanderthal belonged. He was

succeeded within the last 200,000 years by modern *Homo sapiens*.

One of the big disputes in the origin-of-man story came when molecular biologists said they could show that African apes were closely related to humans, but that Asian apes were not.

A yet bigger surprise was in store when it was inferred from molecular data that humans had diverged from the African line of apes not 25 million years ago, but less than 7.5 million years ago.

But, even with the most advanced laboratory aids, the scientists have difficulty assembling a complete picture because their

evidence is fragmented across Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Moreover, the jigsaw has been disturbed dramatically by French researchers who claim that human ancestors might have arrived in Europe 2.5 million years ago, more than 1.5 million years earlier than previous estimates.

Dr Eugene Bonifay, from the National Centre for Scientific Research, in Marseilles, suggests, in his findings on fossil tools, that the first of our ape-like ancestors to come out of Africa were *Homo habilis*. This species was thought to have lived only in Africa.

World experts will be forced to rethink the lineage of our origins should this revelation be proved correct.

Planet fakery exposed

Johannes Kepler, the father of modern astronomy, fabricated data in presenting his theory of how the planets move around the sun, apparently to bolster acceptance of the theory, a scholar claims.

William Donahue, an American science historian, says the evidence of Kepler's scientific fakery is contained in an elaborate chart he presented in 1609 to support his theory. Kepler showed that the planets move in elliptical orbits rather than in circles, as Copernicus had suggested.

In his book describing the insight, Kepler said it was confirmed by independent calculations of the planets' positions. In fact, Donahue says, Kepler derived the data by calculations based on the theory itself. Kepler anticipated criticism of his theory: for centuries, the circle had been considered the only geometrical shape perfect enough to describe the movement of heavenly bodies.

Kepler's fakery is one of the earliest known examples of the use of false data by a giant of modern science.



Falsified data: Johannes Kepler

Writing in *The Journal of the History of Astronomy*, Donahue says the fabricated data appear in calculated positions for the planet Mars, which Kepler used as a case study for all planetary motion. "He fudged things," Donahue says.

Experts, nearly unanimous in defending Kepler, say his act may be less reprehensible than it seems. For instance, methods of investigation and reporting at the

start of the scientific revolution were often quite rudimentary.

"Kepler was one of the people who invented modern science," says Walter Stewart, a researcher with the US National Institutes of Health who is helping Congress investigate cases of scientific fraud. "It's not clear his standards were the same as ours."

Dr Owen Gingerich, a professor of astronomy and science history at the Center for Astrophysics of Harvard University and the Smithsonian Institution in Cambridge, Massachusetts, says Kepler's act may, in its day, simply have been a legitimate rhetorical flourish meant to persuade recalcitrant colleagues of the correctness of his insight. "Normally one would not expect there to be a rhetoric of science, or a political part of the presentation," Gingerich says. "But in reality that element is very important."

Kepler's proposal of elliptical orbits was "a radical departure from anything before," he says. "You could hardly sell that without making it look like you'd done it with tremendous accuracy."

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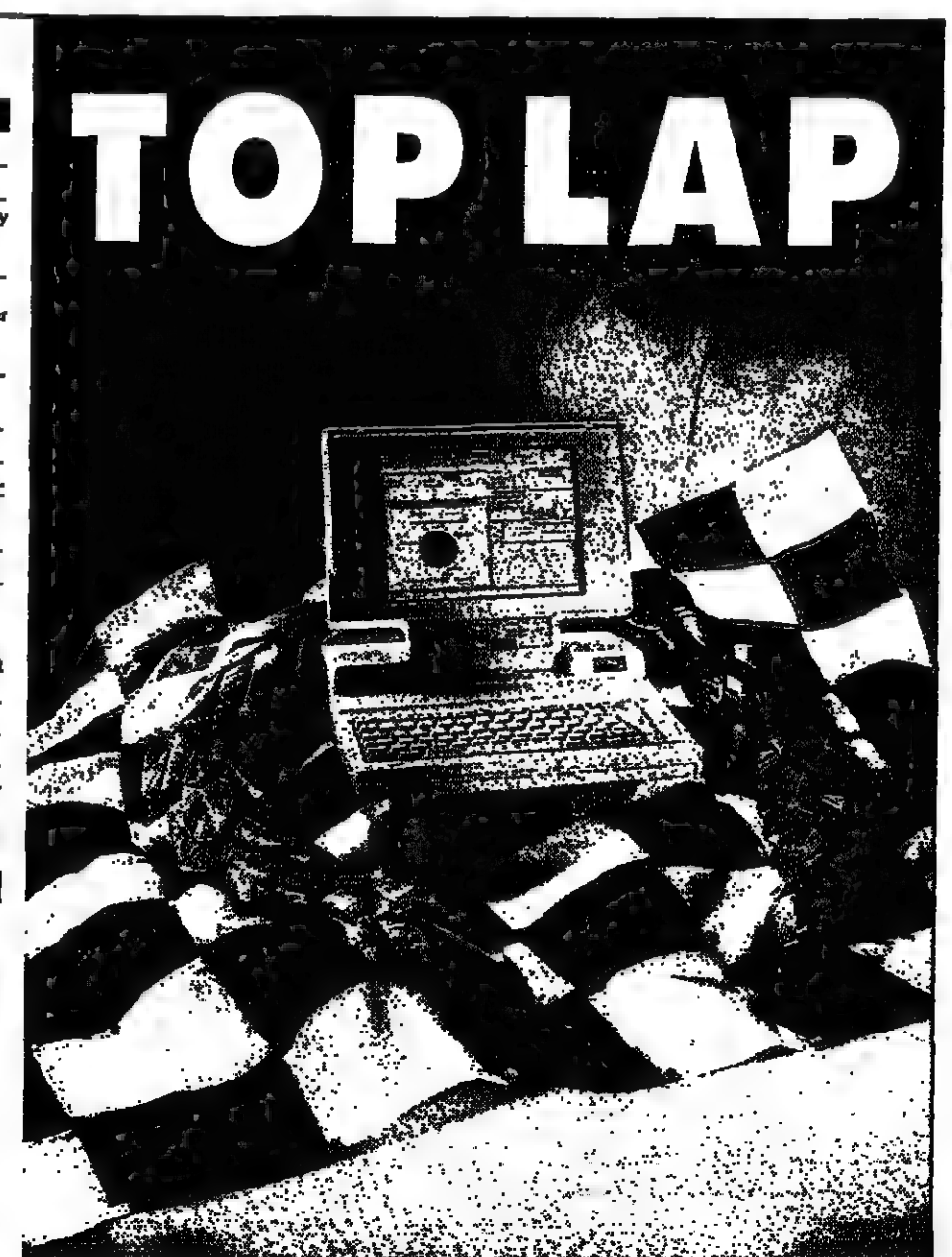
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Long range view: Geese on the Isle of Islay, off Scotland's west coast, where satellite images help conservationists gauge how farming and whisky distilling interests affect wildlife

Space spy for wildlife

Satellites are being used in eco-mapping, helping to check how endangered British fauna live, Nick Nuttall reports

The wildlife that inhabit the estuaries of Britain will have a more secure future if an innovative satellite monitoring scheme is a success.

The project, which is being carried out on tidal mudflats of the River Stour on the Essex-Suffolk border — designated of international importance for its fauna — works like this:

• The RSPB, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, takes samples of the sedimentary layers that are home to the abundant marine life on which birds, many of them migratory, depend.

• On the estuary banks, time-lapse cameras click during the tidal cycles, showing the daily feeding locations of the birds.

• From space, an American Landsat satellite, passing over Britain every 18 days, takes infrared images of the estuary sediment, providing a "signature" of its moisture, particles and biology.

The aim is to see whether the satellite images, which are being supplied by the National Remote Sensing Centre at Farnborough in Hampshire, can be matched to physical sampling of the terrain and counts of the wildlife, which include the grey plover, black-tailed godwit and the dunlin, a small sandpiper.

The RSPB believes that if the project succeeds, it can devise a model, using similar satellite techniques, that will allow its scientists to predict the size of wildlife populations on other estuaries. To do such eco-mapping by hand, it says, would require costly manpower and time, whereas the model would permit year-in, year-out assessment of the health of the nation's ice-free estuaries, which are wintering posts for many species of birds travelling south from northern Europe and Siberia.

Dr Ken Smith, who is orchestrating the Stour project with Dr Len Campbell, an RSPB colleague, says the estuary had been chosen for the pilot work because its ecology is being undermined by natural forces and human activity, such as dredging at the nearby ports of Felixstowe and Harwich.

Long-term, the implications of the Stour project are far-reaching. The images, by creating definitive maps of an estuary's sedimentary make-up, form a basis for comparison with future pictures. Scientists will be able to judge more accurately the impact of

nearby developments, such as docks, harbours and leisure schemes. Planners, armed with proposals for marinas, barrages and other constructions, may soon find organizations such as the RSPB better than ever prepared to oppose their applications.

Dr Jonathan Budd of the Government's nature watchdog, the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC), said the technology was an increasingly valuable aid for his organization's work. The NCC's survey of moorland birds, in which satellite pictures are being used to map the mix of heather and grassland across each square mile of the British landscape, is studying the Grampian, Tayside and Central Scotland regions.

Other conservation projects that have benefited from satellites include a habitat survey of the Isle of Wight.

With better information on Islay's ecology, pressures on the environment and the wildlife, including peat extraction for local

distilleries and farming interests, may be more acceptably balanced. Satellites are also being used by the NCC to help protect *Phyllocolpa*, a small plant which thrives in patches of snow, but which is becoming rare.

Other satellite remote sensing projects by the NCC include mapping of the salt marshes at Chichester harbour in West Sussex and Langstone harbour in Hampshire. Images have helped to give better information on the five plant species there, including green algae and eel grass, a popular food for wintering brent geese.

Budd adds: "We also have had a small project at Burry Inlet, west of the Swansea peninsula on the south Welsh coast, where there are cockle beds and lugworms. We have tried to map the size of the sedimentary particles in the mud banks to identify other possible sites for the lugworms and cockles because they are under threat from recreation and other pressures."

Budd also believes that satellite information, combined with such techniques as computer modelling, will help provide the NCC

with hard facts on the likely impact of developments.

"A company has been wanting to extract peat for gardens from an important bog in Wales," he says. "Before, we would have had to say either 'You cannot extract anything at all' and pay them lots of money or say 'Go ahead', without knowing what the effects might be."

"With developments such as satellite imaging and computer modelling, we can tell them where they could extract without damaging the vegetation."

As satellites become even more sophisticated and numerous, their potential for conservation in Britain is expected to grow. Landsat and France's Spot satellites can focus to as close as 10 metres from the Earth's surface but the Soviet Union is keen to sell satellite services with resolutions at five metres.

So does Budd see the technology developing to a point at which conservationists will be able to spy on egg thieves attempting to steal from a remote Scottish osprey nest — or badger-baiters moving in on a woodland set?

"The big problem in this country has nothing to do with satellite developments, but with the extent of cloud cover," he says. "Often, you can get only three or four good images a year. Over Scotland, you are lucky if you get one."

JOBS

IT casts a wider net for recruits

The information technology industry has always had a preference for hiring technical graduates who are male and aged less than 30 — a group set to shrink rapidly in the 1990s.

The 25 per cent drop in school-leavers will occur while the industry is suffering from widespread skills shortages, and a number of IT companies are considering changes in their recruitment policies.

Most organizations researching the skills shortage point out that any shortfall in new recruits could be offset by hiring part-time workers, encouraging job-sharing and making better use of older staff.

A more radical idea is to concentrate on improving the skills and career prospects of a core team of permanent workers, and to sub-contract out most system development work. A few companies are opening offices in areas where there are large concentrations of school-leavers, mainly in the north.

The British Computer Society (01-637 0471) has several projects to encourage companies to take on disabled staff, and the IT industry is finally realizing that opportunities for women in IT need improving.

A minority of companies, such as International Computers Limited's CPS professional services division (01-788 7272), have been employing women workers for IT for more than 20 years and this option is expected to grow in popularity as the idea of telecommuting becomes more appealing.

The idea of job sharing, however, is largely rejected as unsuitable for software development roles by computing companies, and career breaks have only recently been introduced by the banks, which mainly rely mainly on women workers.

Most large IT firms are encouraging young women to join the industry by visiting schools and offering temporary job shadowing positions.

Digital Equipment (0734 863 711) is the second largest computer manufacturer in the UK and has a staff of 8,000. It has had an ongoing research

study called People in the Nineties to look at alternative policies.

It is considering retaining a core of highly paid strategic staff while expanding the use of contractors for specific projects. "There is more pressure to limit existing numbers and to look at contractors, women returners and part-timers," says co-ordinator of the Digital programme, Tony Attew.

Although Digital does not have a formal home-working scheme, 10 per cent of its staff have a terminal at home, and can apply to their managers to mix home and office work.

Some IT companies admit to a demand from women staff for creches, but Digital is one of the few which has taken steps towards solving this problem — it recently opened its first creche in Reading, Berkshire.

One advantage Digital has is its lack of reliance on graduates, as only 9 per cent of each year's intake is from this group. On the other hand, Electronic Data Systems, the world's largest computer services organization (01-499 9588), recruits technical graduates almost exclusively and more than half of its existing staff is under 30.

EDS acknowledges that many of its prerequisites deter single parents and older workers. Systems engineering recruits are expected to train in the United States for three months and cannot make it a condition of employment that they remain in their home town. Benefits and perks, such as life insurance, are tailored to heads of families and will need to be adapted to younger people.

"It is no good sending people to the States to train as it can look more like a threat than an attraction to some," says Tony Ebbett, EDS's human resources manager.

EDS is considering guaranteeing that staff can remain in their locality. And both EDS and Digital are decentralizing by opening offices in areas around the country where there is a surplus of younger, or unemployed, workers.

Leslie Tilley

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Continued on page 34

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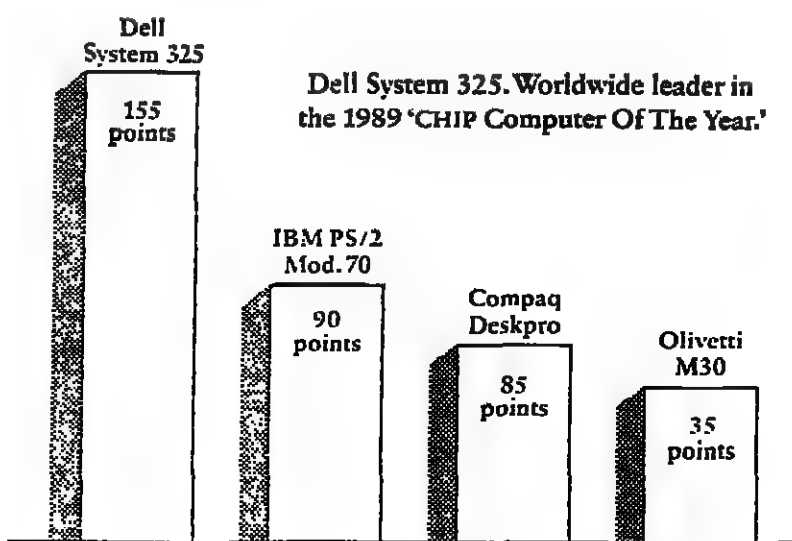
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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Boost for Aids fighters

Thomson Prentice reports on growing optimism among Aids researchers that the disease may be defeated ...

The strongest signal yet that Aids could eventually be defeated was delivered by a leading American researcher this week, coinciding with promising results from an experimental vaccine being tested in Britain.

The news may represent a long-awaited turning point in the fight against the pandemic. By the end of the decade, says Dr Anthony Fauci, director of an American national research effort, Aids could become a manageable chronic disease that no longer shortens life expectancy.

Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in Bethesda, Maryland, has an international reputation in Aids research. He is head of an experimental drug-testing programme involving 10,000 people at 46 American medical centres.

He bases his hopes for the new decade on a growing understanding of the Aids virus, the successes achieved so far in treatment of the disease, and a change in the way that the United States government is making new drugs available.

Until now, Aids drugs have been developed largely by going back to existing drugs which have potential anti-viral activity. The best example of this is zidovudine, or AZT, marketed by Wellcome, which began life as a cancer treatment but which has become uniquely successful in keeping Aids symptoms at bay. Now, according to Fauci, insights into how the HIV infects cells, kills them and reproduces, is leading to new products aimed directly at each of those stages in the growth of the virus. The World Health Organization says more than 40 anti-Aids drugs are being developed. "Already there are several drugs ready to go into human clinical trials that have been tailored to HIV," he says.

Fauci points out that although the 1980s were dark years in the Aids war, there were successes. In 1985, fewer than 40 per cent of Aids patients survived for 18 months; by 1987, 60 per cent lived at least that



Experimenting with hope: most of the world's large laboratories are doing Aids drug or vaccine research, and 40 anti-Aids drugs are being developed

... but a cancer common in HIV-infected patients is spreading

A unknown virus that is sexually transmitted may be the cause of a rare cancer which strikes many Aids sufferers, researchers believe. The condition, Kaposi's sarcoma (KS), is 20,000 times more common in people with Aids than in the general population, but is increasingly seen among those who are not infected with the Aids virus, according to two reports in *The Lancet* this week.

Some doctors believe that a new epidemic of KS is spreading in Africa, the Caribbean, and among

homosexual men in the United States. They think that the disease was probably introduced simultaneously with Aids among the homosexual community in the US 10 or more years ago.

Kaposi's sarcoma causes purple or brown blotches on the skin, but also attacks the lungs, brain and intestines. Although it is seldom fatal in itself, it is a contributory factor in many Aids deaths. Suspicious that a new virus is involved have been raised by a study by researchers at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, which monitor the Aids epidemic in the US.

Evidence of an increase in KS among homosexual men who are not HIV carriers has been found by another research team in New York.

The Atlanta group discovered that, among Aids sufferers, KS is more common in those who were infected with HIV through sexual

contact than through contaminated blood. Women with Aids are more likely to have KS if their sexual partners were bisexual men rather than intravenous drug abusers. Homosexual or bisexual men with Aids are at greatest risk.

Before the Aids epidemic began in the US, KS was a rare disease in America and Europe, but more prevalent in central Africa. It was one of the first symptoms displayed in the early stages of the epidemic in California and New York, and today homosexual or bisexual men living in those areas are most vulnerable to it, the Atlanta researchers say.

KS may be more prevalent among heterosexuals in the Caribbean, central America and Africa than in the US, they add. "Kaposi's sarcoma in persons with Aids may be caused by an as yet unidentified infectious agent, transmitted mainly by sexual contact," they conclude.

SCIENCE REPORT

Step closer to arthritis cure

A natural substance, discovered in human cells could lead to new ways of combating inflammation and diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis.

In the January 25 issue of *Nature* (vol 343, pp 336-346), Robert C. Thompson and colleagues from Synergen Incorporated, a biomedical company based in Boulder, Colorado, have isolated a protein that blocks the action of interleukin-1 (IL-1), a natural hormone that has been implicated in inflammatory disorders.

IL-1 is secreted by certain types of blood cell and has a variety of effects on different tissues in the body. The white blood cells that trap foreign bodies such as bacteria produce IL-1 to induce other kinds of blood cells to proliferate. Its action in other tissues can lead to inflammation.

IL-1 works by sticking to special "receptors" on the surfaces of target cells, whether other kinds of blood cell, cells that line blood-vessel walls or cartilage cells in joints. Like keys in a lock, these receptors are made specially to interact with IL-1 molecules. This docking process sparks off biochemical changes in the target cell.

The power of IL-1 is so great, and its influence so pervasive, one would expect the body to produce its own watchdog to ensure that IL-1's activities do not get out of hand. This is what Thompson and colleagues have found. For the same cells that make IL-1 also produce an inhibitor substance that can stick to IL-1 receptors. IL-1 and its inhibitor race each other across the body in search of free receptors.

Each receptor has room for only one molecule at a

time: a receptor playing host to an inhibitor molecule cannot receive a "genuine" IL-1 molecule. This kind of inhibition is not unknown, but what is remarkable in this case is that the inhibitor can lock into the IL-1 receptor without setting off any kind of biochemical reaction inside the target cell.

This is an entirely novel finding: it is the first instance of an inhibitor that works by blocking another molecule's receptor without eliciting a biochemical response from the target cell. When IL-1 binds to the receptor, it sends a signal, firebells ring and lights flash. But the inhibitor acts so stealthily that the target cell takes no notice. Given that the inhibitor must have a similar shape to IL-1 for it to stick to the same receptor, it is odd that the latter provokes a response, whereas the former does not. Why this is so is unknown, but it raises a number of possibilities.

First, the careful use of the inhibitor, particularly in animal models of human disease, could help distinguish those aspects of inflammatory disease that are related to IL-1 from those that are not. In short, it could clarify the part played by IL-1 in disease.

Second, study of the molecular differences between IL-1 and the inhibitor might yield clues about how molecules bind to receptors. But researchers will be most intrigued by the possibilities of a substance that is, at the same time, a perfect foil for IL-1 and a possible basis for drugs free from inflammatory side-effects.

Henry Gee

Nature/Science News Service 1990

It could clarify the part played by IL-1 in disease

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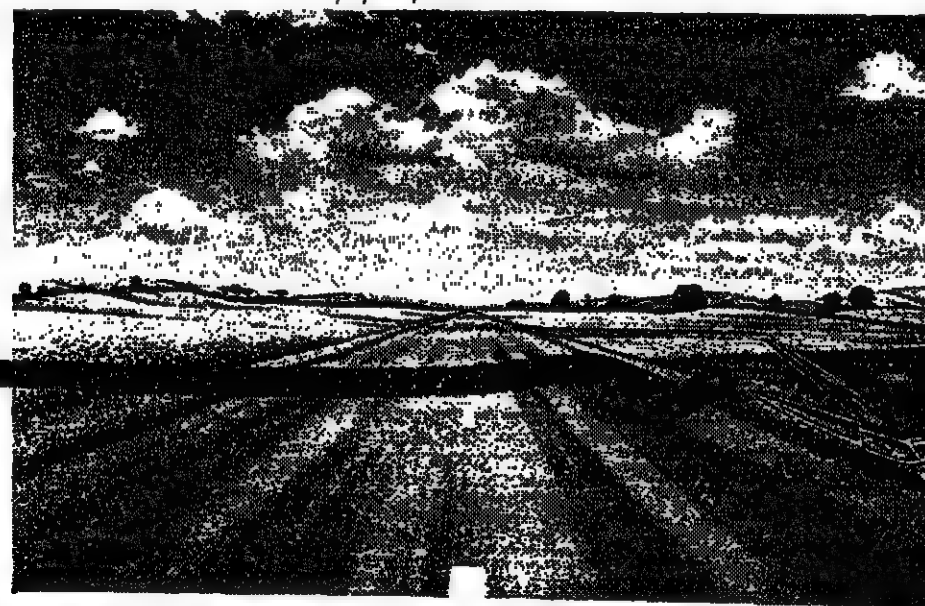
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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Software for the lending

Libraries could be the losers in a European battle over copyright

For years public libraries have not been merely the lenders of books. Records, videos and even compact discs have been steadily added and libraries now want computer software, both for use on the premises and for renting out.

But they may be banned from offering access to computers and from lending software to the public if the European and UK software industries win a copyright battle with the European Commission.

A draft directive on the legal protection of computer programs published at the end of last year is going through the committee stage, prior to being debated at the Strasbourg Parliament.

According to the commission, software is "not clearly protected" in all member countries by existing legislation. Even in the UK, which has a lead in copyright law, the position regarding public libraries is unclear.

Libraries have made computers available to the public for word processing and other tasks. They are also keen to allow the public to borrow software, as with music recordings and video tapes.

However, according to Ross Shimmion, director of professional practices at the Library Association (LA), libraries have been forced to cut back on offering computer services due to the "aggressive" stance taken by software organizations, which have made legal representations to local authorities.

The directive is meant to clarify the issue of software copyright across Europe, and proposes an exemption for public libraries stating that the rights of suppliers should "not be exercised to prevent use of the program by the public in non-profit-making public libraries".

But the software industry is marshalling its considerable forces to fight the exemption. The software suppliers' Federation (FAST) is representing the computer industry, and leading software houses have contributed to a fund to back their stand.

The group's director, Bob Hay, says: "It is so easy to download a £700 program and make a copy in a few seconds, unlike film and video."

This view is backed by the Computing Services Association. "We don't think the public should have simple access to very expensive software they can copy," says director general Doug Eycions.

Rental will only encourage people to make copies. However, we do not want to prohibit software in libraries but we also do not want to make it an automatic right."

However, the Libraries Association and its European counterparts take the view that libraries have "a statutory right to lend all new materials and would fight any proposal to prevent rental of software".

The LA points to its new agreement with the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) allowing the lending of music on compact discs and records. It says it is just as easy to borrow a recording and make a copy at home before returning it.

The BPI says it took the view that the public libraries have a statutory duty to provide a full service and that their primary purpose is to supply books. Recordings are only a limited and subsidiary service that is not expected to be greatly expanded because of limitations on funds and space.

It points out that Section 66 of the Copyright, Design and Patents Act, which became law in the UK last year, reserves the right of the Department of Trade and Industry to override any restrictions on public libraries.

Shimmion hopes that the same view could be taken by the software industry. "We hope to come to an agreement with them in the medium term," he says.

Leslie Tilley



Racing into space: the Japanese rocket taking off yesterday

Japan Moon-bound

The Japanese took a big stride yesterday in their bid to become the third superpower in space, after the United States and the Soviet Union, when they sent a satellite on a mission to the Moon.

If successful, the Muses-A satellite will be the only spacecraft to visit the Moon since the American Apollo manned missions and the Soviet Union's last landing of an unmanned vehicle, Luna 24, on its surface in 1976.

The slender three-stage M3S-2 Japanese rocket roared from its launch pad at the Kagoshima Space Centre, nestled between mountains on the country's southern coast, and into the night sky over the Pacific Ocean at 8.46pm (11.46am GMT).

Originally set for Tuesday, the launch was postponed, with only 18 seconds to go, after an electrical switching problem cut off power to a hydraulic pump used to control the nozzle of an auxiliary booster rocket.

Dr Hiroki Matsuo, the director of the mission, said Tuesday's delay was the first time in five launches of the solid-fuel M3S-2 that the countdown had been stopped in the final 60 seconds.

Two agencies handle Ja-

pan's space duties: the Institute of Space and Astronautical Sciences (ISAS), focusing on research, and the National Space Development Agency (NSDA), launching satellites for applied uses such as communications and weather observation.

The Japanese rocket is a moderate size vehicle com-

pared with the muscle of the powerful American and Russian launchers. The M3S-2 weighs 62 tons. It is 92ft long and 5.5ft wide at its widest point. But it could not carry a spacecraft with enough fuel to fly directly to the Moon. So the mission was planned around two satellites. The

Muses-A was the larger of the satellites, designed to carry a smaller one. The idea is to put Muses-A in a highly-elliptical Earth orbit that will bring it within 11,000 miles of the surface of the Moon.

Just before crossing the Moon's orbit, the craft will release the smaller satellite. A

'The launch will help develop technology needed for exploration of other planets, including control of orbits'

kick motor" aboard the smaller craft will propel it into a lunar orbit. Because the Moon orbiter carries no batteries, it will follow a path in sunlight during the first 30 days, picking up solar power to send data on temperatures and electric fields to the "mother"

satellite. The larger satellite will continue circling Earth, swinging past the Moon and collecting data on space dust and other phenomena. This will be the 13th satellite launched by ISAS and the fifth use of the M3S-2 rocket.

Japan has advanced rapidly in aerospace in recent years. Although it was noted for its aviation technology during the Second World War, the industry was banned by US occupation forces. As a result, Japan entered the aerospace race late. But it has set ambitious goals for the 1990s. These include developing the powerful H-2 rocket, deploying a module to be linked up to the US space station, Freedom, and acquiring basic technologies for an independent manned presence in space.

Japanese companies are keen to use space to advance into the aerospace industry and to conduct experiments in microgravity, in hopes of finding new materials for the micro-electronics and pharmaceuticals industries.

Officials of ISAS said the launch will help develop technology needed for exploration of other planets, including precise control of orbits and high-efficiency data transmission from distant satellites to Earth.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Continued from Facing Page

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BRIEFING

Bolt from the blue

Scientists have long assumed that lightning strikes with the same power wherever it occurs, but a new study contradicts that notion. Dr Richard Orville, an atmospheric scientist at the State University of New York, at Albany, compared five million lightning flashes along the US East Coast in 1988 and found that the mean peak currents of bolts striking the ground in the lower latitudes were nearly twice what they were further north. He also found that lightning struck more often in Florida than in New England. Orville, who directs the National Lightning Detection Network, says one explanation for the variation is that the thunderclouds that generate the electrical charges grow larger in volume in the lower latitudes through the combination of heat and moisture. The study was published on January 11 in the journal Nature.

Power pack

A coal burning device which promises cheaper energy has been developed by researchers at Sheffield University. It uses crushed or pulverized coal burnt in a sealed and fully

automatic unit that so far can be used only in the boilers of large power stations. The idea for the system, known as a Chinese Burner, was brought back from Peking three years ago by Professor Jim Swithenbank, who says it can be built in varying sizes to supply light, heat and power to a single building or a city. "The Chinese had spent two years using outdated methods and technology trying to create a design model. Here in Sheffield we were able to solve most of the problems on our computers in a day or so."

Complex cut

Computer scientists in the US say that last week's nine-hour breakdown of AT&T's long-distance telephone system was a warning of the vulnerability of complex computer networks to unpredictable breakdowns. "When you have an extremely complex system, there can be very simple hidden failure modes that nobody has any idea about," says Peter Neumann, a computer scientist at SRI International who has studied risks in designing complex computer systems. The innate peril of this computer complexity was highlighted by the AT&T breakdown because the company's switching network was designed with exactly this kind of breakdown in mind.

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Winning the fight against cruelty

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RSPCA Blood sports are being revived and a million calls are made to the society each year. Yet there is ground for optimism, Malcolm Brown reports

The British have traditionally thought of themselves as second to none in the way they care for animals, but they are wrong, says Andrew Richmond, chief executive of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Not only is there widespread cruelty, indicated by more than a million telephone calls received by the RSPCA inspectorate in 1988, but some types of animal abuse, such as dog-fighting, which people thought had gone for ever, are re-appearing.

"The villains are turning to all sorts of ways of exercising their own strange attitudes," Richmond says. It is a depressing outlook, but fortunately, he says, the increase in cruelty, which is perpetrated by a minority, is paralleled by a greater public awareness of the problem. "We hope," he says, "that the one will offset the other."

One of the most persistent targets of cruelty seems to be the dog. In 1988, 1,100 of the 1,800 cruelty cases successfully prosecuted by the RSPCA involved dogs, the highest number ever and the highest proportion — 62 per cent — in the society's history.

The dog is a big problem in another way. About 300,000 perfectly healthy dogs have to be put down every year in Britain because they are strays or unwanted. The RSPCA itself deals with 100,000 dogs a year. It

manages to find new homes for 50,000, but the rest have to be put down.

The RSPCA will invest nearly £1 million in a neutering programme this year. Richmond would dearly like to change the public perception of dog neutering so that it matches that of cats. Ten or 15 years ago, cats, like dogs, were a big problem and the public believed neutering was wrong.

"Then, for some reason, the public's perception changed and you can neuter a cat without any problem at all now," he says. "The number of cats that we have for rehoming in our homes now has fallen. If somebody comes to see us and asks for a cat, we have to say we have only a couple. Even five years ago, we'd have had 40 or 50 in every home."

The dog problem is, of course, only one of a seemingly infinite number of issues that the society is tackling. Its briefing document, "RSPCA Analysis of Major Areas of Concern for Animal Welfare", is a disturbing reminder of the remarkable variety of ways in which man purposely or by omission mistreats animals, from illegal cock-fighting to the use of animals — 17,000 in 1988 — for experiments to test cosmetics.

A particular concern in 1992 and the single European market approaches, Richmond says, is the inevitable watering down of the regulations that cover the transport of live animals. He says: "The word 'export' will be removed



John Illingworth with Ben: some owners want to get rid of a dog because it does not match the wallpaper

within the European Community and all the constraints and regulations concerning the transport of animals, which in our view has never been ideal, will be reduced to the lowest common denominator. The animals will suffer because of the lack of proper control.

"This is a great dilemma for us. We are trying to ensure that there are proper controls on the transport of animals. But the fact is that in the end the rules will be less stringent within the EC than they are in this country at the moment, and I have to say that in this country they were pretty inadequate, anyway."

At present, when transported animals cross a European border, they are checked by border control and the animals are often left off to rest at yards specially built for the

purpose. By 1992, that sort of border facility will disappear.

"We're going to have to set up artificial resting places at strategic points throughout Europe," Richmond says. "But this requires the agreement of other countries that are less inclined to be helpful on these issues."

The RSPCA has always opposed the transport of live animals, believing they should be killed as near the point of production as possible. But it has to be pragmatic if it is to do any good.

Richmond believes that this pragmatism has given the RSPCA its campaigning strength. The society's approach to issues such as experiments on animals is that idealism should be maintained, but be tempered with realism. "Some people say it should be stopped forthwith," Richmond

says. "We say that. But meanwhile we have to look after the animals in the animal houses in experimental establishments in the best manner possible."

There is a string of issues — deer farming, fishing, factory farming — where that pragmatic balance has to be struck if the RSPCA is to be effective.

He adds: "There are some people and organizations in this country who take a fairly fundamentalist view that things should be stopped and that is the end of the story. The RSPCA takes a more realistic view."

"Though saying on the one hand that we agree that things should be stopped, we must ensure that the animals that exist under the present arrangements are handled in the most humane manner."

SAD TALES FROM THE STRUGGLE

Inspector John Illingworth will never forget the first animal he had to have put down. "It was a greyhound," he recalls. "The owner had died. It was only five, but the wife did not want it. I stood by while the vet did it. Without shame, I wept bitterly at the waste."

He has since had to deal with owners who want to get rid of a dog because it does not match the new wallpaper or carpet. His brief is to prevent cruelty, by patrolling visiting pet shops, breeding and boarding establishments, zoos, farms, riding schools and animal sales; and monitoring the transport of live animals.

In 1988, the RSPCA investigated 80,120 complaints of cruelty, resulting in 1,743 convictions. When Illingworth, aged 39, responded to an advertisement for inspectors 10

years ago, he was one of more than 2,000 applicants for 24 jobs. Today, the RSPCA does not need to advertise. Last year, 1,200 would-be inspectors wrote

in of their own accord. An inspector's seven-month training begins at the society's headquarters at Harnham, West Wiltshire, and costs £12,500. It includes abseiling in Wales for cliff rescues, tree-climbing for saving cats, stable management and small animal euthanasia training.

An inspector receives a legal grounding and learns to prepare his cases for court. Illingworth, who patrols 1,000 square miles around Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, says: "The course was difficult. The teachers tried to warn us for what we had to do outside."

He was an award for his investigation into an egg-laying unit, where about 20,000 birds were tightly caged with no vent-

ilation, cannibalizing each other and drowning in 6ft of droppings beneath them. "We had to wear masks to enter," he says. "The ammonia content was unsafe to breathe."

He regards every case that results in a successful prosecution as a failure. "It means the animal has suffered to such an extent that we are taking someone to court. The word 'prevention' means just that to the RSPCA."

Chief Inspector Chris Stephens, in Leicester, describes a case which includes rescuing swans that have crashed on motorways, foxes and badgers run over by cars, wild animals trapped in snares and saving anything from injured sparrows to fields of starving sheep.

"I went to a house with two dogs. One was badly cannibalized. I asked the owner about it. He said it usually slept under the television. I looked and found a box. Inside was a little dog. It had been dead for five days. The owner

seemed surprised. He had been sitting there, unemployed, smoking cigarettes, drinking lager, watching television. His dog had starved to death."

Some inspectors work at headquarters in the special investigations unit; wear plain clothes and drive unmarked cars. Their under-cover inquiries range from the transport and slaughter of livestock to the growing problem of illegal blood sports such as badger-baiting and dog-fighting.

Charles Marshall, chief of the officer inspectorate and one of nine RSPCA directors, heads a new programme in regionalizing the inspectorate. After 41 years, he will retire when the last new region comes on stream.

Ruth Gledhill

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We can all get things wrong. When, in 1800, Sir William Pulteney, introduced a Bill to prevent bull-baiting, it failed, and *The Times* cheered roundly (Malcolm Brown writes). Any law that interfered with the disposition of a man's time or property was tyranny, *The Times* said. The poor bulls, scarcely rated a mention.

In Georgian England, man's liberties were everything, the rights of animals non-existent. In London and other cities, says the RSPCA's historian,

Born in the bull-baiting age

Arthur Moss, in his book, *Valiant Crusade*, it was not unusual for horses to be beaten to death, and bull-baiting, bear-baiting and cock-fighting were popular.

But the tide was turning. A leading reformer was Richard Martin, an Irish barrister. His most important contribution was to get the first anti-cruelty law through Parliament in 1822. The Act, which applied

to cattle and other farm animals, was aimed at those who had "charge, care or custody" of them.

Martin fought one case under his own anti-cruelty law that was to get him in the history books. In the case of Bill Burns, he accused a costermonger of cruelty to a donkey. But the magistrates seemed unimpressed by the horrific details. Martin left

the court to return with the donkey. "The magistrate," says Antony Brown in *Who Cares for Animals?* "had no choice but to fine Burns."

The incident inspired a popular music hall song: *If I had a donkey I wouldn't go. D'ye think I'd wallop him? No, no, no! But gentle means I'd try, d'ye see.*

Because I hate all cruelty. The society that was eventually to become the RSPCA was formed in St Martin's Lane, central London, in 1824.

The real moving force behind it was not a public figure but an east London vicar, the Rev Arthur Broome. So dedicated was Broome to animal rights that almost as soon as Martin's Act became law, he

was paying for a man to watch out for cases of cruelty. Prosecution was only one task taken by the RSPCA. Education, the founders believed, was just as important, and they published tracts and sermons and began "to proselytize through schools. They also pushed for more legislation, notably the Protection of Animals Act 1911, which was hailed as the "Animals Charter." It covered almost every imaginable form of animal ill-treatment and greatly increased the severity of the punishments that the courts could hand out.

Helping Animals in Scotland

The Scottish SPCA works to encourage a better understanding of animals and to prevent their ill-treatment, carrying out similar duties in Scotland to the RSPCA in England and Wales. Its team of inspectors is based throughout the country and backed by eight welfare centres — including Scotland's only cleaning centre for oiled birds — over 60 volunteer branches, a growing membership and small headquarters staff, including a flourishing education unit in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The Scottish SPCA, which celebrated its own 150th anniversary in 1989, congratulates the RSPCA on the 150th anniversary of its Royal title.

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David Grant and nurse Lesley McVicar with one of their RSPCA patients

It's a dog's life

The RSPCA treats everything from pets hurt in road accidents to domestic disputes, writes Ruth Gledhill

Five or six dogs and the same number of cats will probably be hit by a car or lorry in north London every day and end up at the Sir Harold Harmsworth Memorial Animal Hospital in Holloway. Staff at the hospital, one of three run by the RSPCA, see about 100 animals and perform 40 operations a day.

The animals, with broken legs, dislocated shoulders, deep wounds, lie in rows of steel cages in the animal equivalent of an NHS hospital, stunned and shocked. Many are too badly hurt to recover and have to be put down.

The hospital puts animals to sleep only if they are too sick or badly injured to recover. "I have to make the decision," David Grant, the veterinary director, says. "It is a fine balance. Sometimes I get delegations from the nurses, when they have become attached to one."

The real tragedies are those knocked down by a car and found with unmarked collars, obviously well fed and groomed. Often the owners do not telephone or call. "The trouble is," Grant says, "the dog disappears and the owner realizes how much easier life is without him. No feeding, no exercising, no grooming. They conveniently forget about him."

Unclaimed cats go to homing centres, dogs to the dogs' home in Battersea, south London.

Grant's constant companion at work and home is Barney, a gentle black-and-tan dog bearing a resemblance to the German Shepherd breed. Barney was a puppy, lying on the operating table at the Battersea Dogs' Home. Grant was about to put him to sleep. "I could not bear to do it, so I took him home instead," he recalls.

A third of the patients seen by him and four other vets are strays. The rest belong to owners who cannot afford veterinary fees.

An internal code tells nurses about their patients. Dogs with crosses by their names are dan-

gerous (some owners have crosses by their names too). Occasionally a dog will be brought in with a serious stab wound in the chest or stomach. The explanation? "The husband and wife have a row. The wife sets the dog on her husband, who stabs it in self-defence."

Recent cases include eight puppies abandoned on Hampstead Heath on Christmas Day and a cat with three kittens left in a house when their owner moved to Cornwall.

In Manchester, owners who cannot afford veterinary fees are dependent on the local branch, which finds a clinic, one of 45 RSPCA clinics. About 50,000 cats, dogs, budgerigars, guinea pigs and other assorted pets pass through the Manchester clinic's doors every year, cared for by four part-time vets, 15 assistants and an ambulance driver, at a cost of £200,000 a year. The clinic, running at a loss of £1,000 a week, depends on legacies to survive.

The RSPCA also has 31 welfare centres providing advice on the care of animals and first aid and 54 animal homes. In 1988, the RSPCA placed 120,268 animals in new homes but had to destroy 100,383 cats and dogs.

Volunteer force

There are 209 branches of the RSPCA in England and Wales, every one registered separately with the Charity Commissioners. They help pay for the inspectors and many run an animal home, clinic, welfare or advice centre, finding new homes for unwanted or abandoned animals and monitoring the welfare of those they find new owners for.

Most branch workers are volunteers with families and careers, devoting any spare time to fund-raising and campaigning.

Frances Hix, chairman of the Sussex Mid and Brighton branch, runs an advertising and public relations company. Her branch has led campaigns against animal displays, circuses and pet shops.

leg new homes is becoming a big problem. It could be we have used up the pool of good homes. Perhaps everyone who wants a dog now has one."

In Bolton, Lancashire, the branch does not even have a run-down refuge for its homeless and abused animals. Dogs go into privately-run boarding kennels; cats and other small animals, into catteries or the garages of the 15 committee members.

Kathy Kay, the branch secretary, says: "None of our husbands can get their cars in their garages. The walls are lined with cages filled with cats and kittens."

The branch runs a welfare centre which gives advice and last year found homes for 233 cats and 93 dogs. Kay says: "The work is fulfilling but involves a lot of heartbreak. Too many people buy puppies but panic when they reach the inevitable chervin stage. The £1,000 new sofa gets chewed up and Fido has to be re-lined."

About a third of the money has been raised and work has started. Fund-raising methods include persuading pet owners to donate cans of pet food to the RSPCA when buying food for their own pets in supermarkets and sponsoring the refuge manager in an aeroplane loop-the-loop.

The branch helps dogs, cats, oil-soaked sea birds, snakes, foxes and fox cubs and even that swallow fishing tackle. Hix says: "If we cannot raise the money to rebuild the refuge, it will have to close. This would be a tragedy for the local animal population. Find-

Many people think of animals as disposable. If it breaks a leg, they throw it away"

Ruth Gledhill



Pigs in a poke: breeding sows may be tethered during pregnancy and unable to turn around

Held behind bars

Much factory farming, says the RSPCA's farm livestock officer, Dr Martin Potter, amounts to institutionalized cruelty. His files contain information about animal living conditions that, as a zoologist specializing in animal behaviour, he finds disturbing and unjustifiable.

Among the examples:

- More than 30 million laying hens, he says, are confined to battery cages in which four or more birds may share a space of only 18in by 20in.
- The inability of hens to move property in batteries means their bones often deteriorate until they are dangerously brittle. This condition, osteoporosis, causes a high incidence of broken bones among hens being transported for slaughter. One leading study suggests that about 30 per cent of them have broken bones by the time they are slaughtered.
- The breeding sow, which is intelligent, gregarious and a

But is the public prepared to pay extra for meat to end factory farms?

nuts and bolts. There is a paradox here. Most farmers are actually caring people but economic considerations have forced them to adopt systems that are inherently cruel."

The present-day priorities of the food industry are captured in figures for government research spending: more than 90 per cent of animal research money is for production efficiency, less than 5 per cent for animal welfare.

So where does ultimate responsibility lie? Farmers and retailers both tend to pass the buck to the customer, and the customer's approach is ambivalent.

But perhaps the mood is now changing. RSPCA officials are encouraged by the explosive interest in green issues and are looking for ways to the animal welfare into that. Later this year, for example, the RSPCA will launch a food labelling initiative that tries to tap green sympathies.

Potter says: "We'd like to see a label on meat and eggs that says the food has been produced to basic minimum welfare standards. We're looking for a commercially viable system of production based on humane lines. Once we've got the guidelines for that drawn up we hope we can take them to the supermarkets and ask them whether they can supply eggs based on these alternative systems."

If the egg campaign catches on, the system will be used for other foods. But it will have to be commercially practical. Cash, of course, is the key to one of the RSPCA's dilemmas over farm animals.

"Should we," Potter asks, "be aiming at a Utopian system for animals, or should we compromise and say, 'OK, for a small increase in production costs the vast majority of farm animals in Britain can enjoy a substantially better life'?"

Everyone, Potter says, will have a different answer. His own would be to go for the attainable goal: "It's not beyond the wit of man to design welfare-based systems for large-scale food production."

Malcolm Brown

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